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Inter-Arab Affairs

Resolution 799 Called Basis To Resolve Issue

NC0202134193 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has said that the Israeli Government must shoulder its responsibility for deporting more than 400 Palestinians from their homeland, a move that has presented a major obstacle to peace. Noting that UN Security Council Resolution 799 forms the basis of solving this problem, he said the Council must do all it can to implement the resolution.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid made these remarks during the opening session of the 28th meeting of the Arab Physicians Federation.

Arab League Denies Seeking 'Confrontation' With U.S.

PM0202131193 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 31 Jan 93 p 3

[Unattributed report: "We Do Not Seek Confrontation With Washington Over Deportees Issue"]

[Text] Cairo, AL-HAYAH—A senior responsible source at the Arab League told AL-HAYAH yesterday that the Arab League was seeking "implementation of the provisions of the UN Charter," not confrontation with the United States over the deportees issue. He reaffirmed that it would continue to press for an emergency session of the Security Council with a view to producing a constructive international stance based on UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali's report, which "clearly and frankly held Israel responsible for the problem and its repercussions" and described Israel's refusal to implement the resolution as a challenge to the Security Council's authority.

He said that U.S. opposition to recourse to the Security Council and its threat to use its veto would not stop the Arab efforts based on paragraph 18 of Ghali's report, which says that "there is an increasing feeling throughout the international community that the Security Council does not care to implement all its resolutions, and that the necessary measures should be taken to uphold Resolution 799."

The source said that Arab contacts were underway to secure international support for an Arab draft resolution (to be submitted after the adoption of the Palestinian draft resolution) at the Security Council, and that if the Security Council did not meet urgently, the Arab group would take the issue to the UN General Assembly.

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas Vows 'Merciless War Against Israel'

NC0202122693 Paris AFP in English 1147 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Damascus, Feb 2 (AFP) - The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas vowed Tuesday [2 February] it would wage merciless war against Israel until all of Palestine was "liberated." In a communique released in Damascus, Hamas said the killing of two Israeli soldiers at a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip Saturday was meant as a message to the Israeli Supreme Court.

The Court last week upheld Israel's December 17 deportation of some 400 Palestinians accused of belonging to Hamas and another group, Islamic Jihad. Israel acted following several deadly attacks on Israeli soldiers.

The Hamas statement made no reference to Israel Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's announcement Monday that Israel would repatriate one fourth of the deportees in the next few days and cut to a maximum of one year the exile of the other 300.

The deportees and the Palestine Liberation Organization rejected the offer.

"Let Rabin and his clique know that Hamas and its armed wing 'Izz-al-din al-Qassam will continue to wage a merciless war until the total liberation of all of the land of Palestine," the statement said. The statement said that a Hamas commando "attacked a Jewish patrol with automatic weapons near the Ganei Tal settlement in the Gaza Strip at dawn on Saturday, killing two enemy soldiers and wounding a third."

The Israeli army said a gun with an 'Izz-al-din al-Qassam sticker was found at the site of the attack.

The Hamas representative in Amman, Jordan said Sunday that the attack showed that the deportation of the 400 had not hurt Hamas.

'Abd-Rabbuh Rejects 'Splitting' of Deportees Issue

LD0202144493 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, head of the PLO Information Department, has spoken to our news department:

[Begin 'Abd-Rabbuh recording] No side has the right to make agreements on the fate of Palestinian citizens or to give a special interpretation of UN Security Council Resolution 799. That would be a serious precedent, for if this resolution is given a special interpretation, the same thing could be applied to other Security Council resolutions such as Resolution 242 and others.

We reaffirm our rejection of splitting the problem of the deportees; yesterday's decision by Israel was an attempt to trick the Security Council and the international campaign calling for the return of all deportees to their homeland. The PLO is committed to its stance which is based upon international legality on the need to implement Resolution 799 calling for the return of all deportees without exception in accordance with the Geneva Convention, for otherwise the PLO would consider that nothing has occurred to change the situation and will continue its efforts aiming at convening the Security Council to consider sanctions against Israel, given its violation of the Security Council's resolutions and its challenge to the will of the international community. [end recording]

'Ashrawi Reaffirms Deportee Issue Link to Talks

TA0202201093 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Interview with Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokesman for the Palestinian negotiating delegation, by Yoni Ben-Menahem; place and date not given—recorded]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Ben-Menahem] Are you disappointed with the new U.S. Administration?

['Ashrawi] We are not pinning great hopes on the new U.S. Administration. Therefore, we are not disappointed. We have found out as a result of our long experience with the United States that it always tries to seek ways out for Israel from the predicaments that Israel creates. But at this stage within the framework of the negotiating and peace process, it was essential for the United States to prove its fairness and evenhanded treatment of all the parties. The attempt to reach an agreement or a deal to save Israel and extricate Israel and the United States from this predicament harms U.S. credibility and the political process.

[Ben-Menahem] What will be the future of the peace process in the region?

['Ashrawi] The obstacle raised by Israel is still there. This is not a solution but a reinforcement of the deportation policy. It seeks to save Israel from implementing the Security Council resolutions. As long as this obstacle exists, there will be no possibility of renewing the negotiations.

UN Envoy on Efforts To Convene Security Council

NC0202192893 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Interview with Nasir al-Qudwah, head of the Palestinian mission at the United Nations, by Nidal Qabalan, in London, on 2 February—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Qudwah] I do not think the Security Council will meet tonight to discuss the deportees. I also believe that the Security Council members are being pressured to delay action. But I think we will manage to convene the Council soon, God willing.

[Qabalan] Can you specify a date?

[Al-Qudwah] Immediately after this interview, I have an appointment with the Security Council president. As I told you, I believe the Council will meet very soon.

[Qabalan] You spoke about some pressures being applied. Can you clarify this?

[Al-Qudwah] You must have listened to the statements of the U.S. secretary of state, in which he expressed belief that the Security Council should not take any further measures concerning the deportees. So things are clear here. As far as we are concerned, we believe the Security Council must ensure that Resolution 799 is respected. It must adopt a new resolution based on Chapter 7 of the UN Charter and imposing specific sanctions against Israel if it fails to implement 799.

[Qabalan] So you oppose the U.S. secretary of state's statement yesterday?

[Al-Qudwah] We believe that Israel's latest decision does not basically change the situation. The only possible solution is the respect for global legitimacy and international law through implementation of Resolution 799 and return of all the deportees. We see no difference between 300 deportations and 400 deportations. We believe the Security Council should reject any attempt to legitimize the principle of deportation. Therefore, we will continue our efforts as before.

[Qabalan] Is there any Arab coordination to confront Israel's position on the deportees?

[Al-Qudwah] Yes, of course. The Arab group at the United Nations is in continuous session. As you know, the Palestinian draft resolution became an Arab one a few days ago. We are working on it with other blocs, including the nonaligned bloc, on the basis that it is an Arab draft. Furthermore, some Arab delegations are in constant touch with several Security Council members, especially permanent ones.

PLO Rejects Rabin Offer, 'Firm' on Talks Boycott

NC0202163493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1549 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Tunis, 2 Feb (MENA)—Sulayman al-Najjab, member of the PLO Executive Committee, has affirmed that the organization categorically rejects Rabin's offer to return 100 Palestinian deportees and reduce the period of exile by half for the others. He said that what is required of Rabin is to fully abide by UN Security Council Resolution 799 calling for the immediate return of all the deportees.

In an interview with MENA's correspondent in Tunis, al-Najjab said that in making this offer, Rabin aims to create excuses to foil the Security Council meeting to discuss imposing sanctions on Israel for its failure to implement Resolution 799 and to avoid a council debate of UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali's report emphasizing the need to implement Resolution 799, compel Israel to implement it, and provide international protection for the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, according to UN Security Council Resolution 681.

Al-Najjab affirmed that the Palestinian leadership's position is firm with regard to nonparticipation in the peace negotiations before Resolution 799 is implemented and all the Palestinian deportees are returned.

He added that Dr. Butrus-Ghali's report is excellent and clear. It contains a call to impose sanctions on Israel if it continues to refuse to implement Resolution 799.

Al-Najjab explained that the United States will be in an embarrassing position if the Security Council meets to consider imposing sanctions on Israel because it failed to implement the resolution. He said that Rabin is responsible for the U.S. embarrassment and not the Palestinian position or Dr. Butrus-Ghali's report.

Al-Najjab said that Rabin's attempts to prevent a UN Security Council meeting will fail and that the only recourse the new U.S. Administration has is to accept the imposition of sanctions on Israel as long as it rebels [tatamarrad] against UN Security Council resolutions. He said the U.S. Administration must do this if it wants to gain some credibility and pursue a course of action that is different from the former administration's double standards.

Al-Najjab pointed out that respect for and defense of human rights was a major slogan raised by new U.S. President Clinton during his election campaign.

Al-Najjab praised President Husni Mubarak and Egypt's position on the deportees' issue, declaring that it stresses the need to implement Resolution 799 and return all the deportees to their country. He added that the PLO fully appreciates the Egyptian stance, which considers the Israeli measure a serious blow to the peace process and the negotiations, which cannot be resumed until the Israeli Government retracts its decision to deport more than 400 Palestinians from their homeland and commits itself to implementing Resolution 732 [as received].

PNC Official Urges Return of All Deportees

NC0202121293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1105 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—A senior Palestinian official has described Israel's proposal to repatriate only 100 Palestinian deportees to their homeland and to return the others after a year as an Israeli attempt to circumvent Security Council Resolution 799, which stresses their immediate return to their country.

In a statement to MENA, Muhammad Subayh, secretary of the Palestine National Council [PNC], said Israel is trying to deceive the world with impractical solutions to the deportees issue, returning only a small number of the 415 deportees and keeping the rest out of their country.

He said this Israeli proposal clearly indicates that the Israeli High Court is merely a tool of the Israeli Government and security authorities; it also illustrates Israel's fake democracy.

Subayh said Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who made the deportation decision and is trying to recant it step by step, must take a brave position and return all the deportees, implement all the Security Council resolution's provisions, and stop the campaigns of terror, murder, and arrest against the Palestinians of the occupied territories to preserve the peace process.

DFLP Dismisses 'Zionist Project' on Deportees

JN0202185493 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] has rejected the Zionist project [on the Palestinian deportees]. This was declared by DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah, who warned of the U.S.-Zionist maneuver to circumvent Resolution 799. He urged the UN Security Council to ensure the Zionist entity's full compliance with the resolution calling for the immediate repatriation of all the deportees.

Hawatimah called for continuing work on having the Security Council issue a new resolution to ensure the full implementation of Resolution 799 to safeguard international legitimacy and preserve UN credibility by using a single standard in all cases where international law is violated.

Al-Husayni Rejects Compromise on Deportees

NC0202203393 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1851 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Telephone interview with Faysal al-Husayni, chairman of the Palestinian delegation's Advisory Committee, in Jerusalem, by 'Abd-al-Mun'im Mabruk, in Cairo; carried during the "Talking Newspaper" program; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Mabruk] You have probably been following the developments of the Palestinian deportees issue. The most notable development has been Israel's agreement to return 100 or more deportees as a partial solution to the problem. At the same time Arab, notably Egyptian, contacts are going on with influential parties. First of all, what is your view of these recent developments?

[Al-Husayni] First of all, there is a clear and very unambiguous UN Security Council resolution calling for the deportees' immediate return and considering the deportation decision illegal.

[Mabruk] You mean Resolution 799.

[Al-Husayni] Yes, 799. We are surprised that some parties are seeking ways to circumvent the resolution, partition it, and consequently depart from its provisions. We were expecting that Israel would adhere to the

Security Council resolution and begin returning the deportees in line with Security Council Resolution 799, not to reduce the duration of the deportation or return some of the deportees.

[Mabruk] Mr. Faysal al-Husayni, do you agree with the suggestion that this development implies an Israeli admission that this issue must be resolved and that these deportees must be returned to their country as a basic step toward the resumption of the peace negotiations?

[Al-Husayni] Actually I do not regard what happened as a solution to the deportees issue or the peace process. I see it as a solution to Rabin's domestic concerns and the problems he faced as a result of this illegal decision. It is an attempt to rescue him from a certain situation that is embarrassing both at home and abroad. Consequently he wants to tell his people that he has not backed down, that he deported some people, and that this deportation remains legal. At the same time he is telling the world: I have backed down and offered concessions. Actually these are not concessions because the basic issue is this: Has responsiveness been shown to Resolution 799, which forbids the deportation policy, or not? So far, we have not heard anything clarifying this point.

[Mabruk] Do you agree that this step constitutes an Israeli admission that the deportees' return is inevitable?

[Al-Husayni] Israel has faced numerous problems as a result of this issue. For example, in the beginning they said the deportation was for two years. By reducing the duration to one year, they have not dealt with the basic issue of involuntary deportation.

[Mabruk] However, by returning some of them, the Israelis are admitting the necessity of repatriating the deportees.

[Al-Husayni] They are admitting that the situation is difficult as a result of what they did. They have not, however, admitted that their action was illegal. What is needed is for Israel not to repeat this action. The only guarantee in this case is for them to return the deportees in line with their full recognition of Resolution 799, responsiveness to it, and a willingness to implement it. Whether it is implemented in two days or two months is another matter. However, what is basically required is for such a step to be based on an Israeli recognition and willingness to adhere to Resolution 799.

[Mabruk] Before we speak of the Arab contacts which were carried out via Egypt, what is your opinion of the U.S. reaction? The U.S. State Department said that this is a positive development. What do you think?

[Al-Husayni] Judging by the provisions of Resolution 799, there has been no adherence to the resolutions. I notice that the United States usually follows up and implements such resolutions to the letter. Now, however, the United States is saying let us find a compromise for Resolution 799. Will they come in the future and say to me, come let us find a compromise on Resolutions 242 and 338, a compromise on the letter of invitation [to the Middle East peace conference], a compromise on the land-for-peace principle? All the principles on which the peace process was founded were compromises to begin with. Do you want to take this compromise and make a new compromise out of it? This would be destructive to the foundations of the peace process.

[Mabruk] In such cases, they say let us give peace a chance.

[Al-Husayni] Giving peace a chance takes place by encouraging a clear atmosphere for peace, not by poisoning the peace climate by depriving the peace operation of its basic breath of life, namely international legality.

[Mabruk] Therefore the PLO, all the Palestinians, and the peace team you lead insist that U.S. pressure must continue and that the criteria of international legality must remain unchanged with regard to all issues?

[Al-Husayni] Exactly. The first and most important thing is that there should be an Israeli commitment to this resolution's provisions and to the total abolition of deportation from Israel's political lexicon.

[Mabruk] What hopes do you place in the new U.S. Administration in this connection and in connection with the next round of peace talks?

[Al-Husayni] We hope that the U.S. position will take into account the issues of principle I have mentioned and consequently involve itself with the Middle East with sound, not lame, steps.

[Mabruk] What is your opinion of the general Arab position on this issue? Do you have any comments?

[Al-Husayni] I do not yet have instances of Arab reaction in hand. When I receive such reaction, I will be able to answer your question.

[Mabruk] No. I am asking about the general Arab position on the deportees issue and ...

[Al-Husayni, interrupting] There has been general Arab rejection of this decision and this conduct. The Arab position supports the implementation of Resolution 799. We hope their position will remain constant.

[Mabruk] We hope that contacts and pressure on Israel will continue.

[Al-Husayni] God willing, it will happen. This is what we want and need.

Hamas Calls Israeli Gaza Withdrawal 'Bait'

JN0202164993 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Feb 93 p 28

[By 'Awdah 'Awdah]

[Text] Amman—The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has asserted that Israel's allusion to withdrawal from the Gaza Strip is only bait and a poisoned gift against which one must be on his guard.

An official Hamas spokesman, Ibrahim Ghawshah, told AL-RA'Y that the Zionist enemy is eager to dispose of the Gaza Strip due to its mounting daily material losses there. However, he added, the enemy wants to give a poisoned gift to the Palestinian people in return for recognition of the enemy occupation of the West Bank and its state that was established on the land of Palestine in 1948. Ghawshah pointed out that the Gaza Strip has fallen militarily and can be occupied by the enemy at any time and at minimum cost.

The spokesman warned against swallowing this bait or accepting the poisoned gift, and called for continued pressure on the occupation authorities to abandon the West Bank. This, he said, cannot be achieved except by increasing military operations and stepping up the intifadah in the West Bank with the participation of all Palestinian factions. He added: Let us force Israeli occupation authorities to withdraw unconditionally from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and let us not relinquish the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948.

Engineer Ghawshah asserted that the Palestinian ranks should remain unified in the battle of the deportees and in confronting the Zionist occupation forces' ferocious onslaught in the occupied territories. Regarding the prospects for negotiations, the Hamas spokesman affirmed that they are in their final stages, especially after the disappearance of Bush and Baker from the political scene and after the exposure of the real face of the Israeli Government under Rabin, who is even more adamant than Shamir, and who carried out the first major deportation operation since 1967.

Asked about his assessment of inter-Palestinian relations, particularly after the Tunis and Khartoum meetings, Ghawshah said Hamas is somewhat disappointed that no steps were taken subsequent to the two meetings, such as referring the Khartoum agreement between Fatah and Hamas to the Fatah Revolutionary Council for approval and endorsement—something which regrettably has not happened—and holding meetings of the various committees, as contained in the joint statement, beginning with the activation committee, which was supposed to have convened in Khartoum on 18 January.

Israeli Decision Called Step in 'Right Direction'

TA0202175693 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 2 Feb 93 p 1

[Editorial: "Rabin's Step—A Retreat in the Interest of Peace"]

[Text] The Israeli Government's decision to allow the return of 100 deportees and the repatriation of the others by the end of this year is a step that demonstrates a retreat of the Israeli prime minister from the basic and unjust deportation decision. There is no doubt that this retreat would not have been possible had it not been for American and European pressure on the Hebrew state to back down from the deportation decision. Moreover, Palestinian popular pressure as well as pressure by Israeli peace forces had the greatest effect in the government's backtracking from the deportation decision.

If backing down from a mistake is a virtue, it was not easy for the Israeli prime minister to backtrack from his decision, but the supreme interest of Israel and the region's peoples dictated that he back down. The issue cannot be confined to Rabin's stubbornness and his persistence in sticking to his view. Moreover, neither Rabin nor any other Israeli leader wants to be accused of destroying the peace process. Rabin came to power and was elected by the Israeli people to save this process from deadlock and failure.

The fact that became clear to Rabin and his government is that the peace process will come to an end if Israel persists in its intransigence and refuses to repatriate the deportees. Therefore, Rabin's retreat has salvaged the peace process and is a victory for the forces of peace.

It should be pointed out that those who advised Rabin that implementing the deportation operation would promote the peace process have miscalculated. They fail to understand the sensitivity of deportation among the Palestinian people. If the Palestinians view this step by the Israeli Government with reservation, undoubtedly it is a step in the right direction and should be followed by confidence-building steps and a return to the negotiations.

U.S. Said Pressuring Israel About Deportees

PM0202163193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Feb 93 p 3

[Unattributed report: "U.S. State Department Sent Invitation to 'Ashrawi; Washington Exerts Pressure To End Deportees Crisis Before Upcoming Round of Peace Negotiations"]

[Text] London, Political Studies Center—Leading Palestinian sources have emphasized that the PLO has received a message from the new U.S. Administration via the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace negotiations, in which it emphasizes its interest in the issue of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 799 concerning the Palestinian deportees and stresses that it is exerting great efforts to compel Israel to implement it, in stages if not all at once.

According to the sources, the U.S. message contains a decisive and firm position on the deportees issue; they say that Washington emphasized that the round of bilateral talks scheduled to be held in the first third of next month will not be held and no invitations will be sent unless tangible progress is achieved at the level of the outstanding deportees issue.

The sources said that the visit being made to Washington by Usamah al-Baz, political adviser to the Egyptian president, falls within the framework of looking for a solution and a way out of the deportees crisis. The sources pointed out that Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation, will visit the United States in the coming few days at the U.S. State Department's invitation to consult over the solutions proposed to the deportees issue.

According to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT's information, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region will take place around the 20th of next month. And the U.S. Administration does not want this visit to take place before progress is achieved vis-a-vis the deportees issue in order to guarantee the success of that visit, on the ground that it is the new secretary of state's first visit to the Middle East.

More than one Palestinian quarter has said that the new U.S. Administration is serious about finding a solution to the deportees issue. And that it is exerting heavy pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to compel him to respond to the proposals offered in this connection.

In this context the U.S. television channel CNN is expected to set up a mobile transmitter in the Marj al-Zuhur area, where the deportees are based, in southern Lebanon in the coming few days.

And there is a prevalent belief that this measure, which is aimed at covering the deportees crisis round the clock, is designed to create a broad public opinion in the United States and the West to put pressure on Israel to compel it to respond to the proposed solutions.

But there is another view which says that setting up such a transmitter in Marj al-Zuhur in southern Lebanon reflects the feeling that the deportees crisis is about to be resolved and that CNN is seeking to be the first to televise the events of this solution.

At any rate, it can be said that the U.S. Administration—contrary to the impression prevailing in Arab public opinion—is throwing its weight into ending the deportees crisis as soon as possible. And it can be said here that the PLO could accept one of the proposed compromises, especially the solution talking about the possibility of ending this crisis in stages in return for Israel's pledge to turn the deportation page forever and not to embark on any deportations—individual or collective—in the future.

It is the basis of official Egyptian circles' view that Yitzhaq Rabin embarked on the deportation decision without sufficient study, and that when he took this step he thought that conditions were suitable in view of the campaigns launched against Islamic tendencies in Egypt, Algeria, and other Arab states.

Official Egyptian sources say that Yitzhaq Rabin, who came to power on the basis of the peace programs which his party announced ahead of the recent elections, fears that a media storm will be launched against him to topple him during the opposition Likud bloc conference in April.

This is why he is interested in reactivating the peace process before this date, and he now needs to extricate himself from the dilemma into which he has driven himself as a result of the deportations.

Algeria

Iraq's Vice President Ramadan Continues Visit

Delivers Message to Ali Kafi

JN0202183193 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Taha Yasin Ramadan, Iraqi Revolution Command Council member, vice president, and President Saddam Husayn's personal envoy, has conveyed a message from the president to his brother Algerian leader Ali Kafi.

The message concerns Iraqi-Algerian relations and current Arab affairs.

The message was delivered when Algerian leader Ali Kafi received the president's envoy in Algiers today.

An IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in Algiers cites Taha Yasin Ramadan as saying that he briefed the Algerian leader on developments in Iraq following the series of allied conspiracies and on the stand taken by the Iraqi leadership, people, and Army to face the enemy attempts, as well as their complete adherence to their country's unity and sovereignty.

In statements to journalists following the meeting, Ramadan said discussion touched on Iraq's recent unilateral cease-fire initiative and Iraq's seriousness in dealing with any positive gesture from the new U.S. Administration.

The vice president pointed out that his talks with Ali Kafi touched on the role which Algeria can play between Iraq and the Clinton administration.

The Revolution Command Council member said that he and Mr. Kafi discussed Iraqi-Algerian relations and the possibility of making progress compatible with the fraternal and credible feeling between the two countries.

He also reaffirmed Iraq's gratitude for the principled stand taken by the Algerian people in support of Iraq since the beginning of the aggression. He said such a stand is appreciated by every Iraqi citizen.

The meeting was attended by Lakhdar Ibrahimi, Algerian minister of foreign affairs; Abdelaziz Khellaf, Algerian minister delegate for cooperation; Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, Iraqi Foreign Ministry under secretary; and the Iraqi ambassador in Algiers.

Received by Consultative Council Speaker

JN0202192393 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1710 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Algiers, 2 Feb (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, Iraqi Revolution Command Council member and vice president, met here today with Mr. Rida Malik [name as received], member of the Higher State Council and speaker of the Algerian National Consultative Council.

Discussion during the meeting dealt with fraternal relations and ways of bolstering them in the service of Arab interests, the situation in Iraq, and the large strides the Iraqi people have made within the framework of reconstruction and the attainment of progress and prosperity.

The two sides also emphasized the importance of continuing their fraternal meetings and positive dialogue to serve their mutual interests and to repulse aggression.

Mr. Rida Malik explained to Taha Yasin Ramadan the domestic situation in Algeria and ways of tackling problems there. He also reaffirmed Algeria's principled and firm stand.

The meeting was attended by Abdelaziz Khellaf, minister delegate for cooperation; Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, Iraqi Foreign Ministry under secretary; and Iraqi Ambassador to Algeria 'Abd-al-Karim Mahmud al-Mulla.

Meets Prime Minister

JN0302103293 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Taha Yasin Ramadan, member of the Iraqi Revolution Command Council [RCC] and vice president, yesterday met with Algerian Prime Minister Belaid Abdessalam.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral ties and the prospects for promoting and enhancing them to reflect the two countries' mutual desire to identify new areas for cooperation. They also affirmed the importance of bolstering these ties on official and unofficial levels. Furthermore, they discussed the activation of the work of the Iraqi-Algerian joint economic committee.

Taha Yasin Ramadan reviewed the process of reconstruction currently under way in Iraq. He spoke on the accomplishments the Iraqis have achieved in the course of their endeavor to rebuild what the aggressors destroyed, underscoring the immense and great achievements realized in this regard despite the unfair embargo being imposed on the Iraqi people. He affirmed Iraq's adherence to its unity and its rejection of all aggressive resolutions, which are designed to undermine its national sovereignty.

Taha Yasin Ramadan valued the principled and constant position of Algeria, its leadership and people, as well as the great role it played in supporting the Iraqi people, something which reflected the strength of their pan-Arab affiliation.

For his part, Belaid Abdessalam paid tribute to the reconstruction drive currently under way in Iraq, and also to the Iraqi people's steadfastness in the face of the links of the aggression and the unfair embargo. He asserted that the accomplishments achieved by the Iraqi people constitute an eloquent lesson for all Arabs, showing them the way to meet challenges through self-reliance. He added that what is currently taking place in Iraq is the best reflection of this will. He expressed

Algeria's desire to enhance and promote fraternal bilateral cooperation in all spheres.

The meeting was attended by Abdelaziz Khellaf, minister delegate for cooperation; Messoud Ait Chaalal, official spokesman for the Algerian Government; Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal, under secretary of the Foreign Ministry; and the Iraqi ambassador to Algeria.

Talks With Brahimi, Mehri

JN0302104293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0855 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Algiers, 3 Feb (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, member of the Iraqi Revolution Command Council and vice president of the republic, met here last night with Abdelhamid Mehri, secretary general of the National Liberation Front [FLN]. Talks dealt with relations between the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and the FLN, and the two parties' militant stands in the face of the challenges facing the Arab nation. The importance of exchanging visits and coordinating stands against international plotting was stressed during the meeting.

The INA correspondent in Algiers said Abdelhamid Mehri expressed the FLN's pride in the Iraqi people's heroic steadfastness against the colonialist aggression and challenges.

Taha Yasin Ramadan also discussed with Algerian Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi the fraternal bilateral relations and the ways of promoting them in the interest of the two sisterly countries and Arab causes. Taha Yasin Ramadan highly valued Algeria's role and principled stand by the side of Iraq in confronting the aggression and unjust embargo imposed on the Iraqi people.

High Court Postpones FIS Appeal Discussion Until 16 Feb

LD0202133793 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] It is learned from judicial sources that the criminal chamber at the High Court has postponed assessment of the appeal in connection with the case of the leaders of the dissolved Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] until 16 February. APS points out that this appeal was lodged by the lawyers of the dissolved FIS because of the absence of some lawyers. The agency mentions that the High Court was due to discuss the appeal today.

Egypt

Musa Comments on Decision on Deportees

NC0202144893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has announced that the process of returning the Palestinian deportees has begun, declaring that this return must not differentiate between the deportees. He said: Our position is that all the deportees must return to the occupied territories.

In a statement today, Musa said that this Israeli measure is a step in the right direction and is in agreement with the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Musa asserted that mass deportation is illegal and the beginning of the deportees' return is a legitimate act. He added that Egypt will continue seeking to return the deportees.

Concerning the UN Security Council's planned meeting to discuss Israel's failure to implement Resolution 799, Musa said it is not merely a question of holding a Security Council meeting. He noted that the request for the meeting followed the failure to resolve the deportees' problem, but if the deportees' immediate return—not only 100 of them but all of them—begins, then this will achieve what we want.

He added that if Israel does not implement the UN Security Council resolution calling for their return, then the matter will be left in the hands of the Security Council itself so that it may adopt the necessary measures to implement its resolutions. He asserted that Egyptian efforts to return all the deportees are continuing.

Answering a question on another issue, 'Amr Musa said that Egypt has agreed to convene the Egyptian-Sudanese committee in charge of the Hala'ib issue.

Musa, Palestinian Envoy Discuss Developments

NC0202153493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1445 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met today with Palestinian ambassador to Egypt Sa'id Kamal. Kamal said after the meeting that he listened to Musa's ideas and opinions concerning the Israeli decision to return 100 Palestinian deportees. He said that the recent Israeli decision has disrupted the policy of deportation pursued by successive Israeli Governments.

In his statement, the Palestinian ambassador expressed the hope that guarantees will be given to the sponsors of the Middle East peace conference to avoid the recurrence of this policy and so that the Palestinian leadership can start an objective discussion and adopt the proper decision regarding the fate of the deportees.

To a question whether there is any intention to send the Palestinian delegation to the bilateral Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, slated to be held in Washington starting 9 February, Kamal said that Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat has the final word on this issue. He noted that the Palestinian side had declared its boycott of these negotiations prior to the Israeli decision.

Kamal said that Israel's decision to return 100 Palestinians will be discussed by the Palestinian leadership during a meeting devoted to studying the decision and its repercussions on the course of negotiations. Kamal pointed out that 'Arafat will visit Cairo soon and will hold lengthy talks on developments in the deportees issue.

Commenting on Lebanon's rejection of Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid's visit to the deportees via Lebanon, Kamal expressed surprise at Lebanon's refusal, noting that Lebanon had originally approved of the visit.

To another question about 'Arafat's visit to Baghdad and its impact on Palestinian-Gulf relations, Kamal said: We have a cause and we are interested in the Gulf states and all the Arab countries. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz has made quite interesting remarks. We also have the issue of the Palestinian prisoners in Kuwait and the Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq.

Mubarak Among First Invited To Visit Clinton

NC0302080793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0715 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Washington, 3 Feb (MENA)—U.S. President Bill Clinton has invited President Husni Mubarak to visit the United States. It will be President Mubarak's first meeting with the new U.S. President to discuss issues of common interest, be it bilateral ties or regional and international affairs.

Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, said President Clinton's invitation to President Mubarak reflects the U.S. President's desire that President Mubarak be among the first leaders he meets at the beginning of his presidential term. He said contacts will be made between Cairo and Washington in the next few weeks to arrange for President Mubarak's working visit to the United States and the agenda of the talks he will hold with President Clinton and senior U.S. officials.

Dr. al-Baz pointed out that President Mubarak's visit is expected to begin following 'Id al-Fitr [last week of March]. The date of the visit, he added, will be fixed through bilateral contacts and according to the schedule of the two presidents.

During their first telephone conversation following the U.S. President's election in November, President Clinton told President Mubarak he wanted to meet him as soon as possible.

Al-Baz on Contacts With U.S., Other Issues

NC0302092993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0750 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Washington, 3 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has said he will leave later today for New York to meet UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali as part of the effort to follow the issue of the Palestinian deportees, the ongoing moves to put an end to this issue, and the developments in the past 48 hours. Egypt has undertaken an active role in the contacts made among several capitals to solve the deportees question. It continues to follow this issue to secure the return of all the deportees to their homes and families.

Dr. al-Baz said he began his contacts with officials in the new U.S. Administration last week, when he met senior officials in the White House and the State Department. He added: The deportees question suddenly came to the fore to impose itself on these contacts, in view of its possible impact on the Middle East peace process and because the issue could have placed the U.S. Administration in a difficult position. In this situation, the U.S. Administration may have found itself forced, at the beginning of its term, to use the right of veto to prevent the Security Council from passing a resolution on an issue on which the administration did not wish to resort to such a measure.

Dr. al-Baz explained that during the contacts, there was agreement that the best solution would be the immediate return of all the deportees. But the U.S. Administration realized it was difficult to convince Israel of such a solution, particularly as there was another operation in which two Israeli soldiers were killed and because intensive efforts were being made to resolve the deportees question. Dr. al-Baz said the U.S. Administration put pressure on Israel to find a solution to this problem but in the end it believed the Israeli step was positive from the U.S. viewpoint, because it opened the door to solving the problem. They [the Americans] hope this step will be followed by other steps to resolve the issue fully, he added.

Dr. al-Baz stressed that his contacts with U.S. officials revealed the new administration's desire to continue the Middle East peace process and its readiness to try to eliminate any obstacles, especially with the continuation of the peace process a strategic goal for all the participants and because achieving peace is essential for establishing stability and consolidating security in the region. He said he sensed that the new U.S. Administration's officials appreciated Egypt's positive role in the peace process and its constant efforts to establish security and stability in the region.

He said officials in the new administration feel that tangible progress has been made in the bilateral peace talks between the Arabs and the Israelis, particularly in the last two rounds. They view this achievement as an encouraging sign for the new administration to try to bridge the gap between the parties involved in the talks and to encourage the conclusion of agreements that could prepare the grounds for a peaceful settlement in the region.

Dr. al-Baz said his contacts with U.S. officials also involved consultations on Bosnia-Hercegovina, adding that he conveyed to these officials how strongly the Egyptians feel about the atrocities to which the Bosnian Muslims are being subjected. He said that while Egypt knows of the difficulties facing the initiatives or measures that need to be taken on the situation there, the Egyptian people cannot accept the situation deteriorating, the murders, rapes, or other atrocities being committed. There are demands, he added, to take action, because the state of "impotence" in the face of this situation does not go along with the image portrayed for the new world order.

Concluding his statement, Dr. al-Baz said he believed that the new U.S. Administration is placing Bosnia at the top of its foreign policy priorities and is about to determine the measures it will take in the face of the serious and complicated situation there.

Egyptian, U.S. Efforts on Deportees Viewed

NC0202192093 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Commentary by Ahmad Sha'ban: "The Palestinian Deportees Are at the Focus of Egyptian Diplomacy's Attention"]

[Text] In line with its consistent sponsoring of Arab causes and its untiring efforts to solve them, Cairo is currently the focus of intensive contacts to end the Palestinian deportees' crisis in harmony with their right to return to their country and the resolutions of international legality. Continuous Egyptian efforts have been made in all directions since Israel deported more than 400 Palestinians with the hope of surmounting this problem, which might have an adverse effect on the peace sought by all the region's nations. It is time this peace process witnessed some positive steps following more than four decades of negative attitudes that further complicated the issue.

One point that might be worth pondering is that Israel passed a resolution abolishing an earlier decision banning contacts with PLO members while at the same time deporting an unprecedented over 400 Palestinians from their country. Some might point out that Israel deported Palestinians in the past. While emphasizing the illegality of earlier deportations, the recent one exceeded all bounds and was apparently a hasty decision because the Israeli Government later announced that some of the Palestinians had been deported by mistake. It actually allowed some to return.

We wish to state, as Egypt clearly emphasized, that this deportation is illegal. While the Israeli Government bolstered its position, in its own view, by a supportive decision from the Israeli High Court of Justice, we declare that the world community and international legality, represented by the Security Council, rejected the Israeli measure. Security Council Resolution 799 was passed, calling for the deportees' return.

Cairo has spared no effort to contain the situation since the crisis began. In the past 48 hours, President Mubarak telephoned Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin more than once especially to discuss the deportees. President Mubarak also telephoned U.S. President Clinton two days ago to discuss the matter. Egypt's efforts did not stop here. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa visited Israel earlier and made intensive efforts with the Israeli officials to persuade Israel to change its position. His excellency met more than once with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres and contacted some heads of state and foreign ministers who attended the economic meeting in Switzerland—all in an effort to implement the Security Council's resolution calling for the deportees' return.

Despite the reports of the past few hours about Israel's agreement to allow 100 deportees to return as a result of U.S. good offices seeking a compromise, the general Palestinian view and the view of the deportees themselves reject compromises and call for the return of all.

While the UN Security Council plans to meet today to discuss this issue and adopt a resolution on it following UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali's recommendation to impose sanctions on Israel, there is news of U.S. efforts to postpone the meeting until the U.S. Administration has further contacts with Israel. The U.S. Administration regards Israel's decision to return 100 deportees as a step in the right direction toward resuming the Middle East peace process.

While the Israeli Government has actually decided to return 100 of the deportees and sent medicines and foodstuffs by helicopter to them, it is urged to fully implement the UN resolution and close this file instead of partitioning the solution, particularly as it has decided to reduce the deportation's duration for the others to one year instead of two.

Egypt's active and continuing efforts, in which President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has taken part, are bound to effectively contribute to the resolution of this crisis, especially as Egypt—in 'Amr Musa's words—does not discriminate among Palestinians, no matter what their affiliations.

Syrian Envoy Meets Musa, Comments on Deportees

NC0202124893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1147 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met Syrian Ambassador in Cairo 'Isa Darwish today.

Darwish said they discussed Arab issues and asserted that the two countries' views are identical on every issue.

Commenting on Israel's decision yesterday to allow 100 Palestinian deportees back, he said the deportees' issue is an inseparable whole. He said that with Security Council

Resolution 799 clearly stipulating their return to their land and homes, with the deportations violating international law and the Geneva Convention, and the international community unanimously endorsing return, the main goal must be the return of all the deportees.

Darwish said: We support the deportees' cause as a legal and humane issue. We support international law and legitimacy and a single standard, because this will impart credibility to the new world order and international legitimacy.

He added: The Israeli deportation decision threatens the Middle East peace process and thus threatens world security and peace. We demand applying Chapter 7 of the UN Charter to Israel, as was the case in the Gulf crisis, and the imposition of sanctions against the party that violates international resolutions.

The Syrian ambassador said no date has been fixed for a meeting of the Arab cordon states.

Palestinians Urged To Refuse Israeli Proposal

NC0302072793 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0435 GMT 3 Feb 93

[From the press review]

[Text] AL-AKHBAR's editorial views the Israeli Government's surprising decision to return around a fourth of the Palestinians unjustly exiled from their homes. The paper says the Israeli leaders prefer to haggle when they deal with foreign politics. Looking at the circumstances of the decision to return 100 Palestinians, it would appear to be the result of intensive U.S. attempts to avoid the expected difficulties Israel would face when the issue is submitted to the Security Council, after Israel refused to implement Resolution 799 to return all the Palestinians it mercilessly and unlawfully expelled.

The paper adds: Undoubtedly, Washington will do everything to spare its ally Israel the consequences of its refusal to implement the resolution. The paper urges the Palestinian deportees to reject Israel's piecemeal method of correcting its legal and humanitarian mistakes. They must insist on the need for full compliance with the will of the international community and demand that just as they were deported together, they must all return together. Victory, God willing, will be on their side.

Sudanese Figures Express Regret at Hala'ib Position

NC0202161293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1325 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—Consultative Council Speaker Dr. Mustafa Kamal Hilmi received today 'Umar Nur-al-Dayim, secretary of the Sudanese al-Ummah Party, and Mubarak 'Abdallah al-Fadil al-Mahdi, a leading al-Ummah Party figure and former Sudanese interior minister.

During the interview, which was also attended by Mufid Shihab, chairman of the Consultative Council's Arab, Foreign Affairs, and National Security Committee, they reviewed the inalterable principles governing Egyptian-Sudanese relations. The Sudanese officials expressed their pride in Egypt's pioneering role and the Sudanese people's desire not to harm the two fraternal countries' special relationship. The Egyptian and Sudanese delegations also called for continued bilateral contacts to clear any transient matters marring the two countries' relations.

In remarks following the meeting, Mubarak al-Fadil al-Mahdi expressed regret at the Sudanese regime's infringement on the inalterable relations between Egypt and Sudan, its diversion of the Sudanese people's attention from the real problems they face, including their oppression at the hands of the authorities, its exportation of its problems abroad, its artificial provocation of the Hala'ib crisis, and its behavior in connection with the Egyptian educational mission in Sudan, all of which have harmed the Sudanese people.

Al-Mahdi said the border dispute over Hala'ib was in the process of being resolved via the two countries' joint committee when the Sudanese Government's decision to refer the matter to the UN Security Council created tension in relations. He noted that the Sudanese Government did this despite Egypt's full legal right to the Hala'ib triangle.

'Umar Nur-al-Dayim stated that Egypt is able to absorb the errors made against it by any regime because it believes that the goal of inter-Arab solidarity is more important that any irresponsible action or reaction.

Dr. Mufid Shihab said the Sudanese Government's recent escalation of the issue will not affect the two countries' longstanding relationship or drive Egypt into demonstrating a reaction that will worsen the situation because Egypt appreciates its responsibility toward the Arab nation.

Musa, Libya's al-Bishari Discuss Crisis With West

NC0202214093 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met this evening with Ibrahim al-Bishari, Libya's permanent representative to the Arab League, and discussed the developments of the Libyan-Western crisis in light of the efforts exerted to find a peaceful settlement to this crisis.

Speaker Says Laws To Conform With Shari'ah

NC3101212893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1551 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 31 Jan (MENA)—People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Fathi Surur has emphasized the Assembly's full commitment not to pass any laws that violate the Islamic shari'ah, which is based on the Koran and the genuine traditions of the Prophet. He noted that demands to apply the shari'ah on the basis of implementing the views of Islamic jurists would be a mistaken interpretation encouraging terrorism and extremism. Dr. Surur noted that the ruler is the one responsible for maintaining the good of the community, as long as he does not violate the Koran and the genuine traditions of the Prophet.

Dr. Surur made these remarks during a meeting today of the special People's Assembly committee that is debating the question of terrorism. The committee listened to the opinions of the leaders of Egypt's political parties. Dr. Surur pointed out that judging by the views of the 10 party representatives that took part in the committee's two sessions, all parties unanimously condemn terrorism, believe Islam is opposed to it, and stress the need for sound religious education. He added that the party leaders had tackled the question of terrorism from the security, political, democratic, social, and educational aspects. They stressed the need to use weapons against those who use weapons, entrench democratic practices, give the parties access to the audio and visual media, achieve social justice, develop the education system, and to try to eliminate erroneous beliefs. [passage omitted]

Austrian National Council President Arrives

NC3101070493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2203 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 30 Jan (MENA)—Dr. Heinz Fischer, president of the Austrian National Council, arrived in Cairo tonight on a five-day visit to Egypt at the invitation of People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur. [passage omitted]

Meets Assembly Speaker

NC3101145893 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] This morning People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur received Austrian National Council President Heinz Fischer and his accompanying delegation in a meeting attended by the People's Assembly deputy speaker and the Austrian ambassador to Egypt.

Discussions during the meeting focused on the situation in the Middle East, specifically the Palestinian deportees because the issue is an obstacle to peace. The meeting also focused on Egypt's role in establishing peace and stability in the Middle East region. Fischer expressed his appreciation and that of his country for President Mubarak's policy and the Egyptian role in moving the peace process forward. The meeting also touched on the situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina, with both sides condemning the massacres and favoring a decisive stand to implement the Security Council resolutions. They also reviewed bilateral relations and the need to activate them in all fields, specifically in the parliamentary field.

Indonesian Embassy Denies Discussing Ties With Israel

NC0302083793 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1257 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 2 Feb (MENA)—The Foreign Ministry received an official memorandum from the Indonesian Embassy in Cairo denying news agency reports that the Indonesian Government is discussing establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Indonesian Embassy said that this report is "fabricated, totally untrue, and rests on no proof whatsoever."

The memorandum says that the Indonesian Government's position on the Palestinian issue is "stable and unchangeable and calls for Israel's withdrawal from all territories."

Court Reinstates Leader of Misr al-Fatah Party

NC3001212593 Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 28 Jan-3 Feb 93 p 2

[Text] An Administrative Court decision restoring 'Ali-al-Din Salih as chairman of the Young Egypt [Misr al-Fatah] Party has raised questions about the neutrality and credentials of the semi-governmental Political Parties Committee, reports 'Abd-al-'Azim Darwish.

The Cairo Administrative Court has ruled in favour of 'Ali-al-Din Salih, chairman of the Young Egypt Party (Misr al-Fatah), who has been locked in a power conflict with a rival party faction led by Major General 'Abdallah Rushdi. The conflict had come to a climax in May when Rushdi led a party "coup," removed Salih from the party's chairmanship and appointed himself in his place. The Political Parties Committee, a semi-governmental body charged with licensing political parties, took the unprecedented action of extending recognition to Rushdi as the "legitimate" party leader.

The Administrative Court's decision did not only reverse the Committee's action but, in the view of political analysts, cast doubts about its neutrality. It strengthened apprehension that the government of the National Democratic Party (NDP) might be using the Committee as a "cat's paw" for intervening in the affairs of opposition groups.

The Court's decision was the second indirect condemnation of the Committee's action in the space of eight months. The Court, acting on a lawsuit filed by Salih in June, had ordered a stay of execution against the Committee's decision recognising Rushdi as the party leader.

Several opposition parties, suffering from internal dissension themselves, expressed fear at the time that the Committee's action amounted to intervention in the affairs of opposition groups.

Ironically, the Committee did not act on a conflict between Ibrahim Shukri, leader of the Socialist Labour

Party (SLP) and his rival Ahmad Mujahid despite the latter's repeated appeals for intervention.

Salih welcomed the court's decision as "just and logical" and also as a condemnation of the Committee's action. "We hope the committee will be shamefaced enough to implement the court's decision," he said.

An opposition source once described the Committee as an "authority for banning, not licensing, political parties," pointing out that out of 12 parties which are legally active at present, only one, Al-Wafd, was licensed by the Committee. The others were legalised either by direct orders from the late President Anwar al- Sadat or by court orders.

Several opposition figures have demanded the disbanding of the Committee, particularly following the amendments that were introduced recently to the political parties law which, they believe, placed the opposition groups under the Committee's guardianship. These amendments obligate the opposition parties to seek the Committee's permission before holding "contacts" with foreign organisations and to submit a report to the Committee on the outcome of these "contacts."

Despite the court's verdict, the power conflict between Salih and Rushdi is continuing unabated.

Rushdi and Salih also exchanged accusations about embezzling funds from the treasury of the party newspaper, also called Misr al-Fatah. The accusations revealed strong connections between the party and Libya.

Court Cites Reasons for Banning Party Formation

NC0102145693 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic 1046 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 31 Jan (MENA)—The Parties Circuit of the Higher Administrative Court today rejected the formation of the al-Sahwah [Awakening] Party, led by Shaykh Yusuf al-Badri.

Counselor Muhammad Hamid al-Jabal, head of the State Council [the judiciary arm of the civil service] presided over the court session, assisted by Sayyid Yusuf and Yunan Mikha'il.

Citing the legal grounds for its ruling, the court said that the party's program includes collecting donations from outside the country, a practice that contradicts party laws, the norms of Egyptian society, and the country's political, social, and economic system.

IMF Official on 'Unprecedented Success' in Program

NC3001063893 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2015 GMT 29 Jan 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 29 Jan (MENA)—Dr. 'Abd-al-Shakur Sha'lan, member of the IMF Board and representative of the Middle East group in the fund, has stated that Egypt completed the first phase of the economic reform program with unprecedented success and that the IMF currently is studying an important report which covers Egypt's accomplishments in this phase.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, Sha'lan said the second phase of the economic reform program is almost completed and that implementation is expected to start in the near future.

Dr. Sha'lan affirmed that the difficult part of the reform process is over and that the second phase does not require any financial support, because Egypt has managed in the past 18 months to provide foreign currency reserves capable of financing a year's imports.

He pointed out that the coming phase will focus on redeveloping, reoperating, and rehabilitating manpower and structural reform. He said the IMF and the World Bank will help achieve these goals through continuous consultation with the Egyptian Government on policies related to liberating prices, investments, and trade.

The IMF official said the financial reform process in Egypt has succeeded considerably, since inflation rates have dropped to 9 percent and the budget deficit is at 3.5 percent. He remarked that the Egyptian Government succeeded in financing the budget deficit through actual revenues with the help of treasury bonds.

Sha'lan added that interest rates are expected to be reduced in response to supply and demand in the market as a result of the tangible drop in inflation rates. [passage omitted]

Debt to Italy of $600 Million Rescheduled

NC3101112893 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 25 Jan 93 p 1

[Text] Egypt has reached an agreement to reschedule its $600 million debt to Italy on easy terms. Egypt will begin a second round of talks next month to reschedule 50 percent of its total debts to the Paris Club countries. Dr. Maurice Makramallah, minister of state for international cooperation, stressed the importance of reaching an agreement with Italy, noting that Italy is the last country, of those involved in the first round of the Paris Club agreements, with which Egypt needs to reach an accord. The first round of the Paris Club agreements wrote off 15 percent of Egypt's foreign debts. To date, Egypt has rescheduled debts totalling $18,600 billion to approximately 17 countries of the Paris Club.

Libya

Proposal To 'Merge' With Egypt, Sudan Reported

NC2701132993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1648 GMT 27 Jan 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 27 Jan (MENA)—A high-level Libyan official who accompanied Libyan revolution leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi during his recent visit to Egypt has said that Libya is ready to merge [wihdah] with Egypt and Sudan without any reservations, and that this subject was discussed with the Egyptian officials during all the meetings held in Cairo.

In its edition for Friday [29 January], AL-MUSAWWAR magazine cites the Libyan official as saying that Libya proposed to Egypt the possibility of merging the three states—Egypt, Libya, and Sudan. He says that the Arabs need unity to confront the West and its aggressive inclinations, adding that the absence of a united Arab position has been a factor in the failure to resolve many Arab issues.

Al-Qadhdhafi ended a one-week visit to Cairo last Sunday. During this visit, he met more than once with President Husni Mubarak and dealt with many bilateral, Arab, and international issues. [passage omitted]

North Korean Official Received in Tripoli

LD0102214093 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1730 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Tripoli, 1 Feb—The secretary general of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation had a meeting this afternoon in Tripoli with Jang Song [name as received], deputy vice foreign minister of Democratic Korea, who is visiting the Great Jamahiriyah.

During the meeting, the vice foreign minister of Democratic Korea reaffirmed Democratic Korea's stand and solidarity with the Great Jamahiriyah in confronting the neocolonialist campaign and in rejecting the unjust coercive measures resulting from the false Resolution 748.

The vice foreign minister of Democratic Korea also expressed his great appreciation of and pride in the Great Jamahiriyah's stances with regard to liberation issues throughout the world.

Mauritania

Paris Club Agrees to Rescheduling of Debts

LD3101224693 Nouakchott ORTM Radio in Arabic 2030 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Excerpts] A delegation from the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, headed by Finance Minister Ken Acheikh Mohamed Sadek and including the planning minister and the governor of the Mauritanian Central Bank, recently paid a visit to the French capital to participate in the Paris Club meetings which convened on 26 January.

This meeting was attended by representatives of the Governments of Morocco, Germany, Austria, Brazil, Spain, the United States, France, Britain, and Holland. On the agenda was the question of reducing our country's external debt. [passage omitted]

As a result of the meeting, our country obtained a decrease in the guaranteed public debts at a rate which could reach 50 percent, and the rescheduling of the rest of this debt on very (?good) conditions. This reduction also allowed for important facilities for the payment of the Mauritanian special debt over a period covering the years 1993 and 1994. We recall in this context that the treatment of this debt is connected with an overall amount exceeding 24 billion ouguiya covering a period from January 1993 to 31 December 1994. [passage omitted]

In the end, the concerned countries approved the principle of holding a meeting at the end of the subsidy period to deal with [word indistinct] the size of our country's debt. [passage omitted]

Morocco

Case Presented for Imprisoned CDT Leader

LD2701134693 Rabat MAP in English 1310 GMT 27 Jan 93

[Text] Rabat, Jan 27 (MAP)—Speeches for the defence of Noubir Amaoui, secretary general of the Democratic Labor Confederation (CDT), started Tuesday [26 January] afternoon at the Rabat appeals court. Four attorneys out of thirteen to take the floor and plead Amaoui's case were heard. Tuesday speeches focused on breaches in arrest procedure and the economic, political and social context which prompted Amaoui to say words seen as 'libellous and defamatory' for the government.

Amaoui has served nine months out of a two year sentence by the Rabat first instance court.

Appeals Court Confirms Sentence

LD2901132693 Rabat MAP in English 1244 GMT 29 Jan 93

[Text] Rabat, Jan.29 (MAP)—The Rabat appeals court Thursday [28 January] afternoon confirmed the sentence delivered nine months ago by the court of first instance against Secretary General of the Democratic Labor Confederation (CDT) Noubir Amaoui.

Amaoui, member of the USFP [Socialist Union of Popular Forces] Political Bureau, was sued for libellous charges against members of the Laraki government in an interview he granted to spanish daily "EL-PAIS" and was sentenced to a two year imprisonment term.

The trial in appeals started on January 21.

King Hassan Advises Preachers on Friday Sermons

LD2701142093 Rabat MAP in English 1353 GMT 27 Jan 93

[Text] Rabat, Jan. 27 (MAP/Pool/UMA)—Friday sermons which are oblivious of the collectivity problems will have no response and no impact, said King Hassan II. In a letter read out by the sovereign's adviser Ahmed Ben Souda at the opening ceremony of the 2nd meeting of world preachers, King Hassan II spoke of the qualities and role of the preachers saying they should be erudite and open-minded to enable the Islamic nation successfully to go through this rapidly changing world juncture without losing its cultural, religious and civilisational values.

The Islamic ummah should unite its ranks, recover its due world standing and effectively take part in the world dialogue, King Hassan II said calling preachers to assume their constructive role to help the Islamic nation achieve its lofty goals and shield it against fanaticism, isolationism...which give a distorted image of Islam and deeply harm the Islamic nation's interests.

Friday sermons should preach union, peace, love, tolerance, coexistence, fraternal cooperation and quest for science knowledge, said the sovereign.

USFP Boycotting Election Commission

LD0202152493 Rabat MAP in English 1310 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Rabat, Feb 2d (MAP)—The Political Bureau of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP/opposition) suspended as of Jan 30 until further notice participation in the national commission [words indistinct] supervising electoral elections [words indistinct]. The party daily 'AL ITTIHAD AL ISHTIRAKI' reports the decision was announced by USFP Secretary General Abderrahmane el Yousfi who was addressing the party youth section central committee in Rabat.

The decision was taken as an [passage indistinct].

Sudan

Demand for Egyptian Withdrawal From Hala'ib Dropped

PM0202150193 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Feb 93 pp 1, 4

[Jamal 'Anqarah report: "Khartoum Withdraws Its Conditions. Hala'ib Committee To Meet Soon"]

[Excerpts] Khartoum—Sudanese Acting Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Dr. Qutbi al-Mahdi said yesterday that his country's government "no longer insists on the withdrawal of the Egyptian forces from the Hala'ib area as a condition for the meeting of the joint committee, which will now probably meet early this month, nor for the meeting of its security subcommittee to discuss agreement violations by the two sides."

Al-Mahdi said that Syrian mediation and the efforts made by the Libyan leadership and Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat on the issue of Hala'ib "have succeeded in reactivating the issue of relations with fraternal Egypt which had been somewhat frozen and tense following recent developments in the area."

That success, he added, is reflected in the resumption of the negotiations and the possibility of a joint committee meeting in Khartoum early this month with these developments at the top of its agenda. [passage omitted]

The Sudanese Foreign Ministry under secretary commended the efforts made some Arab leaders who mediated between Cairo and Khartoum. He specifically mentioned Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. [passage omitted]

TNA Issues Statement on Clinton Presidency

EA0202154593 Khartoum SUNA in English 0918 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Khartoum, 2 Feb (SUNA)—The Transitional National Assembly, TNA, has welcomed the new U.S. President, Bill Clinton, and called upon the new Congress to commence candid dialogue with Sudan for the sake of opening new horizons of cooperation between the two peoples and for ensuring social justice and peace all over the world.

The TNA's external relations committee, in a statement it issued Monday [1 February] explained that the Sudan, like other nations, has been following with concern the changes [that have] happened in the U.S. administration because of the paramount role of the American Presidency on the sequence of international events and international decision-making process.

The statement reflected [the] hope of Arab, Islamic and all Third World countries that the change in the U.S. Presidency would be accompanied by a positive evolution in the American foreign policy.

The statement criticised the double standard attitude adopted by the former U.S. Administration as regards the handling of the problems in the Middle East area, referring to Israel's rejection of the U.N. resolutions and its inhuman practices against the Arabs at the occupied lands. The statement condemned Israel's defy of the Security Council's resolution pertinent to withdrawal from the occupied land and passiveness of the USA toward the massacre of the Muslim people in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

The TNA's statement wondered why the USA and its allies moved their military machinery to attack Iraq and to impose fatal economic and air embargos on it without legal authorisation from the Security Council.

The statement went on to say that the Sudan was not an exception as regard this biased treatment, saying that U.S. Congress had issued a hasty resolution based on information from the outlaws [SPLA, Sudanese People's Liberation Army] movement and voluntary agencies collaborating with it condemning human rights practices in Sudan. The resolution was followed by a similar one from the UN General Assembly which was intended to intimidate and blackmail the Sudan, the statement said. The statement affirmed respect of human rights in Sudan, saying that the practice is a must in Islam.

The assembly expressed hope that the new U.S. Administration would reconsider this double standard policy.

It called on UN [passage indistinct] to allow the Palestinian and Bosnian peoples to practise their legitimate rights.

Egyptian Paper Says al-Turabi Planning To Assume Power

NC0302111993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1030 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 3 Feb (MENA)—Sudanese sources close to the Islamic Front in Sudan have revealed that Front leader Dr. Hasan al-Turabi seeks to implement a scenario similar to that followed by Lieutenant General 'Abd-al-Rahman Siwar-al-Dhahab, former chairman of the Transitional Military Council, during the last democratic period there.

The newspaper AL-'ALAM AL-YAWM [World Today], in its issue published in Cairo, quotes these sources as saying that al-Turabi invited Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir to accept the rank of field marshal so that he could be pensioned off in exchange for giving up power in favor of the civilians. In that case, al-Turabi and his deputy 'Ali 'Uthman would effectively assume power and a sovereign council [majlis siyadah] would be formed, chaired by Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of the Transitional National Council (appointed parliament).

Kuwait

Foreign Minister Calls For More Pressure on Iraq

LD0202132493 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1050 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 2 Feb—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, stressed the need for the world community to continue putting pressure on Iraq to implement UN Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait.

In a press statement made on his arrival in Abu Dhabi this afternoon, Shaykh Sabah said: "Everyone is required to bring pressure to bear not on only Iraq but also on the world community as a whole to implement these resolutions."

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad pointed out that during his visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE], he will convey a message from Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, emir of the State of Kuwait, to his brother UAE President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan.

He pointed out that the message is connected with bilateral Kuwait-UAE relations, developments in the situation between Kuwait and the UAE, developments in the situation between Kuwait and Iraq, especially on border demarcation issues which Iraq has not yet recognized, Iraq's defiant attitude toward Kuwaiti prisoners [in Iraq], the question of compensation, and allegations against Kuwait that have been made by the Iraqi mass media.

He added that he will have talks here on these issues with Shaykh Zayid, with Foreign Minister Rashid al-Nu'aymi, and with other senior officials.

Regarding the UN Security Council's attitude toward international conflicts and the charge of "double standards," Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad affirmed Kuwait's rejection of the expulsion of Palestinians from their territories. He pointed out that "if there is anyone who can feel the suffering of the Palestinian brothers, it is us Kuwaitis, because we as a people have tasted the agony of displacement and occupation."

However, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad made it clear that there is a difference between the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the issue of the expulsion of the Palestinians. In the former case, a country occupied another, although both of them are members of the United Nations and of the Arab League; in the latter case, however, oppression was inflicted on brothers of ours, and we would fight, struggle, and put more pressure on the UN to ensure that they can return to their homes, God willing.

Minister Announces Plan To Raise Oil Production

LD3001115693 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0840 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Text] Kuwait, 30 Jan (KUNA)—In a press interview published here today, Kuwait's oil minister said that no agreement has been signed with any foreign company about the petrochemical complex.

In an interview to the daily AL-ANBA, Mr. al-Baghli said serious and advanced steps have been made in this regard. He was alluding to negotiations with a number of foreign parties and with large and long established companies in the petrochemical industry which have ample experience in manufacturing and marketing.

Mr. al-Baghli also said there is a plan to produce 2 million barrels [per day] by the end of the third quarter of this year. He stressed that Kuwait's current production has reached 1.775 million barrels per day. He said the ministry is seeking to rebuild, using the most advanced systems developed by the Western petrochemical industry, the many oil installations which were destroyed during the brutal Iraqi invasion of the State of Kuwait.

He mentioned that there is a special effort to modernize the refineries, and that by the middle of this year the refining capacity of those refineries will reach 650,000 [unit not specified].

Qatar

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Arrives on Visit

LD0102125593 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, arrived in Doha this morning from Manama on a visit to the State of Qatar as part of a tour of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] states and a number of Arab and Islamic states.

During the visit, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad will deliver a message from his highness [HH] the amir of the country to his brother the amir of the State of Qatar, HH Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani.

Before his departure from Manama today, he said that he (?briefed) Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah on the (?conditions relating to) the Kuwaiti-Iraqi (?borders) and the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions in that connection. [passage indistinct]

Delivers Message to Amir

JN0102183993 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1430 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Doha, 1 Feb (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, amir of the State of

Qatar, has received a written message from His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, on the regional state of affairs, a host of issues of common interest, and the means of enhancing and promoting bilateral ties.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, relayed the message to the Qatari amir when the latter received him in Doha today.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY said that the talks dealt with the latest developments in the Gulf region. The agency added that the Kuwaiti minister explained Kuwait's position on recent regional developments, affirming the need for continuing the implementation of the Security Council resolutions pertaining to the Gulf war cease-fire, particularly those related to releasing Kuwaiti as well as non-Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees and the retrieval of Kuwaiti property.

The talks also addressed the current Arab state of affairs, developments in the Middle East peace process, and a issues of interest to both Qatar and Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia

Paper Urges Arab Support for Deportees' Position

PM0202111193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 31 Jan 93 p 11

[Bakr 'Uwaydah article: "The Refusal To Appeal Is a Correct Stance"]

[Text] A man does not beg for the right to live in his own home with his own kinfolk. The deportees' hard line is the least that could be done in the face of this Israeli arrogance.

Since the Israeli prime minister obstinately made the deportation decision and insisted on carrying it out, many parties, including capitals and figures that are traditionally friendly with Israel, have tried to make Rabin understand that Israel will lose a lot more than it will gain from that behavior, that is if there was anything to gain in the first place. It was all in vain.

When the UN Security Council passed its resolution ordering Israel to repatriate the deportees, Israel's friends made more attempts at persuasion, as did the UN secretary general, but all that was to no avail.

In the hours which followed the Israeli High Court decision (last Thursday [28 January]), more attempts at persuasion were made, but this time the attempts were also aimed at the victims themselves, requesting them to submit appeals. The court decision was drafted in such a way as to give the obstinate Rabin a way out without appearing to be retreating from the deportation decision, or to be complying with Security Council Resolution 799, or to be giving in to international pressure, but to appear to be responding to the appeals submitted by the deportees themselves—if, that is, he should respond.

That is why one can understand the deportees' refusal to give a helping hand to those who deported them, and can even support that refusal. The complication which several parties are trying to avoid is that of having the issue sent back to the Security Council, which would then be tested as to its ability to force Israel to comply with the resolution requesting the repatriation of the deportees or impose sanctions against it. Several parties have been trying to avoid that for various reasons, the most important being to spare the new U.S. Administration the embarrassment of having to exercise or not exercise its right of veto if the Council did decide to impose sanctions against Israel.

The Israeli prime minister, however, did not seem to care. On the contrary, Rabin himself apparently wanted to test and even embarrass the Clinton administration. He did not hesitate to state firmly to the U.S. television networks that "he was confident that the United States will veto any decision imposing sanctions on Israel," adding, in a clear and specific message to President Clinton, that "no U.S. president has ever supported sanctions against Israel."

So why should the deportees, the victims, be asked to be flexible while Israel, the culprit, is demonstrating extreme intransigence? Furthermore, what harm is there in testing the Security Council's ability to implement its resolutions and apply international legitimacy to all members without any discrimination? And why should the intentions and policy of the new U.S. Administration not be tested? That administration will be supervising the course of events in the region for four years. In brief, the deportees' insistence on the implementation of the UN resolution by returning them to their homes deserves collective Arab support for them and their hard line.

Saudi-Italian Cooperation Committee Reaches Agreement

LD0102025093 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] The sixth session of the meetings of the Saudi-Italian committee on economic and technical cooperation concluded in Riyadh this evening.

These meetings studied the best ways and means available to increase Saudi-Italian cooperation in all economic, commercial, investment, and technical fields, and in the fields of higher education, sciences, technology, public works, housing, health, sports, and youth.

In addition, agreement was reached over the suitable recommendations that will be submitted to the governments of the two countries.

In this connection, the two sides recommended the holding of periodic meetings to evaluate the progress of the cooperation between the two countries. The Italian side extended an invitation for holding this coordinating meeting in Rome in January 1994.

United Arab Emirates

Kuwaiti Minister Arrives, Delivers Message From Amir

JN0202145693 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates Radio Network in Arabic 0930 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Excerpts] His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], has received a verbal message from his brother His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the fraternal State of Kuwait, dealing with the current situation in the Gulf region, Kuwait's views on regional developments, and Arab and international issues of mutual interest.

His Excellency Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, conveyed the message when he was received by his highness the president in the presidential office at noon today. [passage omitted]

His Excellency Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir arrived in the country from Doha at noon today on a two-day visit to the UAE as part of a tour of several states in the region. He was received at the airport by Foreign Minister Rashid 'Abdallah, Foreign Ministry officials, and Kuwaiti Ambassador Ibrahim 'Abdallah al-Mansur.

Yemen

Islamic Jihad Leader Reportedly Killed 2 Feb

JN0302081493 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0700 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] An informed source in Sanaa has stated that Rashid al-'Umayshi, the person believed to lead the Islamic Jihad Movement in Yemen, whom the authorities accuse of being behind the recent explosions in Aden, was killed in a clash with the army forces in Lahij yesterday. The security forces also arrested several of al-'Umayshi's supporters in Yemen.

PLO's 'Arafat Continues Visit to Baghdad

Visited by Saddam

JN0202153493 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1500 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 2 Feb (INA)—President Saddam Husayn today visited state of Palestine president Yasir 'Arafat at his place of residence in Baghdad.

The meeting was attended by Tariq 'Aziz, Revolution Command Council member and deputy prime minister; Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department; PLO Executive Committee member 'Abdallah Hurani; Fatah Central Committee Member Sakhr Habash; and the ambassador of the state of Palestine in Baghdad.

More on Talks

LD0202180493 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Brother president and leader Abu Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] met his brother Iraqi President Saddam Husayn this afternoon. The Iraqi president, who was accompanied by Iraqi Deputy Prime Ministser Tariq 'Aziz, visited brother president Abu Ammar at his residence in Baghdad. He congratulated him on his safe arrival and welcomed him.

Talks dwelled on the Palestinian and Arab situation and the development of the Palestinian cause on all Palestinian, Arab, and international levels. The meeting was attended on the Palestinian side by brothers Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO political department; Abdallah Hurani, member of the Executive Committee; Sakhr Abu Nizar, member of Fatah Central Committee; and Azzam al- Ahmad, Palestinian ambassador to Baghdad.

Saddam Decorates 'Arafat

JN0302085793 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, today decorated his mujahid brother Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, with the Mother of Battles medal of the first order in appreciation of the position taken by the mujahid brother Yasir 'Arafat and our heroic Palestinian Arab people, whether living under occupation or in the diaspora, who have spared no effort in supporting their fraternal Iraqi people, their Armed Forces, and their leadership during the great and eternal Mother of Battles showdown, which was waged to vindicate Arab causes and Palestine and to free the nation's wealth.

During the ceremony held on the occasion, the leader president said: Jerusalem has become close. We have become close to it, and it has become close to us. We have never been closer to Jerusalem than we are now. By closeness, I mean identifying with it in the true sense of the word and identifying with its spirit in terms of acting in accordance with heavenly values, which placed Jerusalem in its proper position. If God so permits, Jerusalem will accept the apology for all previous manifestations of absence when it sees the Arabs ridding themselves of the old obstructionist status and bringing themselves closer to virtue and jihad. May God have mercy on the souls of Palestine's martyrs. May He also have mercy on the martyrs of the Mother of Battles. May they have immortality in paradise.

The ceremony was attended by 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council [RCC], as well as RCC members Taha Muhyi-al-Din Ma'ruf, Tariq 'Aziz, Muhammad Hamzah al-Zubaydi, and Mizban Khadr Hadi. Presidential Office Chief Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi also attended.

Attending the ceremony on the fraternal Palestinian side were Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department; 'Abdallah Hurani, member of the PLO Executive Committee; Sakhr Habash, member of the Fatah Central Committee; and 'Azzam al-Ahmad, Palestinian ambassador in Baghdad.

Leader President Saddam Husayn this evening hosted a grand dinner banquet in honor of his brother president Yasir 'Arafat. The banquet was attended by the RCC vice chairman, RCC memebrs, the chief of the Presidential Office, and the delegation accompanying Yasir 'Arafat.

Palestinian struggler Sakhr Habash had earlier recited the following lines of poetry:

The globe and the sun hugged

Palestine was a face on which the al-Buraq [name of the creature on which Prophet Muhammad made his nocturnal journey to Jerusalem and his ascension to the seven heavens] landed.

When love reached its peak, Jerusalem became a frontier for Iraq.

The following is the text of the presidential decree, according to which Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, was granted the Mother of Battles medal of the first order:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

Presidential decree.

In appreciation, by the leadership and great people of Iraq, of mujahid Yasir 'Arafat, the great leader, chief of the Palestinian revolution, and president of the state of Palestine; in recognition of the position he and the heroic Palestinian people have taken; given the fact that merit is earned by the stance taken toward the eternal Mother of Battles and its great principles regardless of the risks entailed; in view of the nature of this position; in commendation of this courageous militant stance; in expression of our affection; and in accordance with the provisions enshrined in Paragraph 1 of the RCC Decision No. 329 of 2 September 1991, we decree the following:

Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, shall be granted the medal of the Mother of Battles of the first order.

Long live Palestine as a free Arab country! Long live Palestine! Long live the mujahidin! God is great.

The competent ministers shall see to the implementation of this decree.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn, president of the Republic

Saddam Meets Air Force Officers, Servicemen 2 Feb

JN0202150693 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1458 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 2 Feb (INA)—President Saddam Husayn, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, today met with a number of officers and servicemen of other ranks from the Air Force and Air Defense.

The meeting was attended by Hatim Hamdan al-'Azzawi, chief of the Presidential Office; Lieutenant General 'Amir Muhammad Rashid, director of the Military Industrialization Organization; and Air Force Lieutenant General Muzahim Sa'b al-Hasan, commander of the Air Force and Air Defense.

Defense Minister Attends Military Exercise

JN3101200493 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 28 Jan 93 pp 1, 6

[Excerpt] Staff General Fighter 'Ali Hasan al-Majid, Revolution Command Council member and defense minister, has met with Maysan Governor Kamil Sajit 'Aziz and the comrade members of the Maysan branch of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party. During the meeting, the minister listened to a detailed briefing on the nature of the jihad role of the party's organization in the governorate and its fruitful daily work in the service of the sons of the governorate.

The defense minister praised the nationalist role of the people's guards in bolstering the people's security and stability. He said: The leading role will always be there at times of crisis in defense of great Iraq when the official in charge is at the head of the strugglers and the people in the governorate, district, and subdistrict. In this regard, we should take our leader and the symbol of our pride, mujahid comrade Saddam Husayn, may God protect and preserve him, as an example.

He called for giving a chance to every zealous citizen in the governorate to express his patriotism as one of his rights to defend the homeland against all forms of aggression and aggressors.

The commander of the Hittin Forces, affiliated with the 4th Army Corps, who holds the rank of a staff lieutenant general, attended the meeting.

The defense minister also attended the Tawakkalna 'Ala Allah [on God we rely] tactical exercise with live ammunition carried out by the Jamil al-Batal formation, affiliated with the Abu-'Ubaydah Forces Command.

The commander of the Abu-'Ubaydah Forces, who holds the rank of staff brigadier general, his staff officers, and the participants in the exercise, gave a detailed briefing on the objective of the exercise, the lessons learned from it, and the nature of the combat missions assigned to them. [passage omitted]

INA Reports Tariq 'Aziz BBC Television Interview

JN0202143893 Baghdad INA in English 1320 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] London, Feb 2, INA—Member of the Revolution Command Council and Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Tariq 'Aziz has emphasised that Iraq was not seeking for confrontation with the former U.S. President Bush, but what happened was in the very care of Bush's private policy.

In a televised interview to the BBC's network, screened yesterday, Mr. Tariq 'Aziz said with regard to the new U.S. Administration, Iraq would like to inaugurate a new chapter with it so that the relations to be ordinary.

He added that as it had previously been said that if attention of the new administration was to concentrate on the question of implementing the UN Security Council's resolutions, that matter could be bilaterally discussed at the Security Council in a practical and objective way.

He has further said that through the discussions, this administration would realize that there is a large number of resolutions have been implemented and this must be taken into consideration in the process of assessing the present situation, for this fact has been designedly subjected to blackout and confusion because the motive of that was continuation of the blockade and aggressions on Iraq and isolating it from the world.

The deputy prime minister has clarified that it was regretable that Bush's administration intentionally resorted in the past to delusion concerning the extent of implementing the resolutions because it wanted to employ that as a political means in order to destabilize the government of Iraq and persistently annoy it via exaggerating secondary problems and arousing them for confounding the political stance and creating a hostile climate against Iraq.

He has pointed out that the UN Security Council resolutions have not breached the subject of the form of government system in Iraq, and that Bush's administration, by endeavouring to associate the question of the economic blockade with the form of the regime in Iraq, was a political stand taken by Bush's administration and confirmed by the British Government, because they wanted the connection between the Security Council resolutions and their antagonistic attitude toward Iraq.

And this, said the deputy premier, made clear the disrespect of the Security Council resolutions, and further said that many of this Council's members had displayed their being dissatisfied with the aggression on Iraq.

In the course of his talk, Mr. 'Aziz cited what Rolf Ekeus, who was in charge of implementing the article "C" of the Resolution 687, had recently said that Iraq had implemented 90 per cent of that article, and that that extent of implementation came under a blackout by the government of the United States and Britian. This is a political but not legal stand and does not reveal knowledge.

Mr. Tariq 'Aziz has said, "what Iraq now wants from the new U.S. Administration and the British Government is that they put aside grudge against Iraq and not to mix them with the work of the United Nations, and to work together to assess the extent of implementation."

If there was any situation requiring discussions, Iraq was ready to study seriously, Mr. 'Aziz added.

Iraq's Deputy Premier Tariq 'Aziz has further said that Iraq's hundreds of millions of dollars are frozen in a number of countries, and wondered why they did not allow Iraq to buy medicines from those very countries and from their companies, especially that there are numerous Iraqis dying for reasons resulting from shortage in food and medicine, and those funds had been frozen unjustly.

He has re-affirmed that Iraq has not any ambitions in the region.

Minister Claims Presence of 'Zionist Groups' in North

JN0302105093 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0948 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 3 Feb (INA)—'Abdallah Fadil, minister of awqaf and religious affairs, has disclosed that Zionist groups are wandering about in northern Iraq under the protection of the cliques of criminals Talabani and Barzani.

In press remarks published here today, the minister said a group of Zionists, escorted and protected by these cliques, entered Zakho and headed for an old deserted church. They then threatened those living in the neighborhood to either leave or be harmed.

He added that other Zionist groups, accompanied and guided by prominent members of the hireling cliques, entered al-Sulaymaniyah. They then inspected those quarters of the city where the Jews used to live before they emigrated with the help of Zionist and pro-Zionist organizations in the forties and fifties.

Arab League Informed of 30 Jan Airspace 'Violations'

JN0302105493 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Cairo, 3 Feb (INA)—Iraq has informed the Arab League of the continued violation of Iraqi airspace by U.S., British, and French planes in a manner that constitutes a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

In a letter yesterday to Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, Iraq's permanent representative at the Arab League said that on Saturday, 30 January, the U.S., British, and French planes continued to violate Iraqi airspace, taking off from their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The planes conducted 61 aggressive sorties.

Attached to the Iraqi delegate's letter were clear details on these violations. He indicated Iraq's willingness to inform the secretary general and all Arab states of these regrettable facts, and asked that the letter be distributed among Arab member states.

Conclusive Measures To Implement Resolution 799 Urged

JN3001153393 Baghdad INA English 1325 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Text] Baghdad, Jan 30, INA—AL-QADISIYAH daily has called upon the Security Council to adopt new and conclusive measures, forcing Israel to implement the Resolution No. 799 to confirm the international legitimacy it had shed tears for everywhere.

An analysis published today said that the policy of deportation and expulsion will remain the basic policy followed by the Israeli authorities to empty the occupied Arab territories from the Arab people.

The paper added that the Security Council had issued its Resolution 795 [number as received], shortly following Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians, but the Israeli authorities brushed aside this resolution and insisted on its rejection of implementing it as it had used concerning other international ones.

The paper referred to the endorsement of the Israeli Supreme Court on Thursday of the decision of deportation by its government on Dec. 17, last which sparked off tension and concern in the U.N. headquarters.

The paper made it clear that the Israeli authorities had used to turn down U.N. resolutions because they were not based on the 7th Chapter of the U.N. Charter, which authorizes the use of force and the imposition of sanctions to secure their application.

The paper queried, had the Security Council been more stern with Israel this time, following its absolute rejection of the Resolution 799 and its endeavours for foiling all attempts and missions made by the U.N. secretary general's emissary?

The U.S. Administration is still opposing any debate by the Security Council to determine fate of the Palestinian deportees in a bid to shirk the real confrontation, the paper concluded.

Paper Says UN Chief Now Aware of U.S. 'Pressure'

JN0202160393 Baghdad INA in English 1350 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, Feb. 2 (INA)—AL-QADISIYAH daily of Iraq stressed that the present UN secretary-general has finally realized the actual part played by the United States in the United Nations in the absence of international will.

The paper said such awareness was necessary, despite being late, to enable the United Nations [to] assume its actual role.

The paper stressed that the present secretary-general should look for the right track and proceed in the right direction away from U.S. pressure.

The paper said the secretary-general must be capable of realizing aspirations of countries that are exposed to injustice as a result to U.S. domination over UN resolutions.

Paper Calls on UN To Rectify 'Deviation'

JN0302122993 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0723 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 3 Feb (INA)—An Iraqi paper has affirmed that it is high time the international community rectified its deviation and put the United Nations back on the right course.

In an article today, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH, mouthpiece of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says that the Bush administration has turned the United Nations and the UN Security Council into tools to implement its foreign policy, which is based on imposing control and hegemony over other nations and looting their wealth.

The paper adds that what has befallen Iraq is a result of U.S. hegemony over the United Nations and causing it to deviate from the right course. The paper indicates that the harm and destruction that have been caused to Iraq are a result of this deviation.

The paper explains that the UN secretary general's acknowledgement that the United States used the United Nations as a fig leaf and that it will lose its credibility is particularly important. Belated as it is, this acknowledgement points to the need to put an end to Washington's control and tampering with this organization's decisions and principles and the international law.

Concluding its article, the paper says that the international community now realizes the importance of freeing this international body from Washington's aggressive policies. Consequently, all the unjust resolutions that have been issued against Iraq under its umbrella should be abolished.

UN Urged To Allow Transport of Sick Children in Planes

JN0102144193 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1330 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Baghdad, 1 Feb (INA)—Fadil Mahmud Gharib, president of the General Federation of Trade Unions, has met with Hiroshi Matsumo [name as received], deputy director of the UN humanitarian efforts in Iraq.

The two officials discussed the possibility of transferring a number of Iraqi children, who became sick or injured as a result of the treacherous 30-state aggression, to Belgium for treatment.

The head of the Iraqi federation urged the UN official to act to allow Iraq to transport the sick Iraqi children on board Iraqi planes. The deputy director of the UN humanitarian efforts program voiced humanitarian feelings over the cases caused by the unjust blockade imposed on Iraq.

Amman Paper Reports on Effects of Embargo

JN0202082393 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 2 Feb 92 p 5

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Maryam M. Shahin]

[Text] Baghdad—Victorian silver tea sets and mink coats are on sale in the crowded antiquities shop across from the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad. Packed with silver from Esfahan (in Iran) and colourful Kurdish rugs, the shop does not ordinarily sell English silver and fur coats, but hard times have changed that.

"Ladies from good families come to me and ask if they can put their things on sale in my shop," said Fati Shakir, the owner of the shop. Elegantly dressed herself, she speaks at length about the impoverishment of the former upper and middle classes.

"Many of the women who come to sell the Georgian and Victorian tea sets had received them as wedding presents," says Mrs. Shakir.

Selling wedding presents is "not a good sign" she says. Economic hardships created by two wars in ten years and 29 months of U.N. sponsored economic sanctions are at the root of the situation, says the long-time shop owner.

Sanctions, says Monica Press of relief agency Oxfam, "are biting those that are the most vulnerable and the educated middle class."

Many Iraqis agree. "Do you think that the government is being hurt or hurting?" asked Dr. Faruq 'Azzawi, head of the al-Yarmuk Hospital, one of the largest health centres in Baghdad.

"It's the little man and the English professor that are being hurt by the sanctions, not the government," he insists.

The immense effort going into the reconstruction and, in some cases, the new construction of bridges, government institutions, food warehouses and statues has given people a psychological lift. "We are rebuilding in spite of sanctions," said Yasir Tillawi, a food merchant. "We will build a greater Baghdad than the one before the sanctions and the war," he said proudly.

But reconstruction and a new drive for self-sufficiency in food-stuffs is taxing the people in the short term.

While the government is providing for 60 per cent of the basic food needs through the ration system, which was introduced shortly after the sanctions were imposed in August 1990, most Iraqis live on that alone.

A large percentage of Iraqis is thus bound to be underfed for some time to come if economic sanctions are not lifted.

With the banning of imported luxury items in December of last year, over 100 items, are no longer available on the public market.

While black market goods exist in relatively small quantities, they are only available to certain people and 700 times the price they were sold before the ban.

A 3,000 per cent inflation rate continues to further impoverish the people. The government hopes that by increasing agricultural production, the economic burden on the average citizen will be somehow alleviated. But the newly-inaugurated Saddam River, as well as the factories being rebuilt, will take at least another year to reap fruit.

In the meantime, Iraqis are willing to sell oil and make concessions of all sorts to improve their economic conditions.

"We want to sell oil, of course, but at slightly better terms than those presently being dictated to us," said Minister of Trade Muhammad Mahdi Salih during a briefing with the Jordan Times.

"But to receive one third of the $1.6 billion being proposed for our oil sale is just unreasonable," said Mr. Salih, referring to U.N. resolutions 706 and 712 which dictate the terms of the Iraqi oil sales.

The terms of the resolutions also clearly state that the money from the oil sale would have to be used for the purchase of food and medicine.

Mr. Salih confirmed that Iraq had sold 10 tonnes of its gold reserves to buy wheat from Australia, shortly before the $4 billion of Iraqi frozen assets were effectively refrozen in mid-1992.

"When a country starts selling its gold reserves, that is an indication that its money supply is not excessive," said one aid official.

Little is known about how many assets Iraq really has, except for the $4 billion in banks across the world, one billion of which are in the United States.

Ministry of Trade officials say that at present the Iraqi government is buying some of the basic food staples that are put into the ration system from private Iraqi merchants in Iraqi dinars to avoid reducing their already depleted foreign assets.

Iraqi merchants seem to be able to get hold of foreign currency to buy food supplies through third parties.

The enormous reconstruction effort, like the food supply system, has been made possible by an incredible resolve on the part of the government to rebuild, in part out of pride and in part to show that "Iraq loses no war."

"Only someone like Saddam Husayn can fuel such an enormous effort," said one Iraqi intellectual. "He and the Ba'th Party are so resolute in their ambitions that any other considerations become irrelevant," he added.

While many observers have been speculating for much of the last two years that the reconstruction effort in Iraq was only possible through sanction busting, such critics appear to have under-estimated the ingenuity of the Iraqis.

Most of the food warehouses, 50 per cent of which were bombed by the coalition forces in 1991, are being rebuilt from leftover construction material and melted down metal sheets. A visit to one of the warehouses in the Diyala Governorate clearly showed that the roof was a patch-work of metal sheets taken from the old warehouse.

In the mechanics district of Baghdad, dozens of welders are taking apart every metal barrel and every piece of scratch from bombed out buildings that can be rewelded and used again. Iraqi-made cement provides for the rest of the needed material.

Ingenuity provides for much of Iraq's well-being these days, where even leftover parts will have an end to them.

"During this last raid on Baghdad by the Americans we were so afraid that they would hit the water supplies or our electricity centres again," said one resident of the middle class al-Mansur district.

Many of the telephone and electricty lines in Baghdad and al-Basrah have been rebuilt by what the government still had in stock supplies and partly by reused lines from villages and smaller towns.

While Iraqi officials and people are hoping that economic sanctions will be lifted in the first year of President Clinton's term, they are preparing themselves for a long wait.

KDP Statement Praises 'Peaceful Initiative'

JN0302094293 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] holds in great esteem the peaceful Iraqi initiative announced on 19 January, describing it as an embodiment of Iraq's faith in peace and its unmistakable concern for achieving it.

In a statement issued at the conclusion of regular meetings today, the KDP Central Committee saluted the splendid jihad stand demonstrated by the Iraqi people under the leadership of leader struggler President Saddam Husayn and their rallying, with all their nationalist forces and various ethnic groups, around his wise leadership, while continuing to build and achieve glories despite the circumstances of the unfair embargo.

In its statement, the KDP condemned the treasonous stands taken by the agent and subversive cliques in northern Iraq, affirming our Kurdish people's rejection of their treasonous course, their subservience to foreigners, and their lowly attempts to realize the dreams of their masters concerning the undermining of Iraq's national unity, security, and sovereignty.

The KDP asserted that the attempts being made by the forces of evil and deception, led by the United States, and their continued aggression on Iraq will only bolster the Iraqis' determination to continue their march of progress and development under the leadership of their resolute struggler President Saddam Husayn.

The statement concluded by saying: The KDP cannot but hold in high esteem the magnanimous and heroic leader who realized the greatest accomplishments and gains for our Iraqi people and achieved autonomy for our Kurdish people.

Monastery Stormed, Plundered in Ninawa

JN3001081293 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 29 Jan 93

[Excerpt] Agent saboteurs in the northern part of the homeland have committed a hideous crime against places of worship and holy sites. A group of four saboteurs armed with Kalashinkov and hand grenades stormed the Virgin Mary Monastery in Ninawa Governorate and plundered its contents and valuable and unique works of art.

An INA correspondent in the governorate said that, after seizing control of the monastery, the agents, from the gangs of agents Jalal Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani, placed its monks and those working there in one room, tied their hands and feet, blindfolded and severely beat them, and threatened to kill them.

The INA correspondent quoted the monks as saying that the saboteurs plundered metal cups, rare works of art from 1842, and old Iraqi and foreign currency. The monks added that the agents were not satisfied with this and desecrated the Communion, which represents the flesh and soul of our Lord Christ, peace be upon him. The monks added that the saboteurs also broke and heavily damaged wood and iron gates, windows, and works of art. [passage omitted]

AL-JUMHURIYAH Condemns Attack

JN3101094793 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0845 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] Baghdad, 31 Jan (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper has described as a hideous and insolent crime the acts carried out at the Virgin Mary Church by saboteurs affiliated with the gangs of agents Jalal Talabani and Mas'ud Barzani.

In an article published today, the newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH adds: It is not strange for those who renounced honor and patriotic sentiments, sold themselves cheaply, and agreed to act as servile stooges for imperialist invaders and other covetous parties to commit such acts.

The paper affirms that those who sought to capitalize on the people's cause and the homeland to realize personal ambitions are capable of perpetrating all conceivable atrocities, and of renouncing all principles and creeds.

Government Forces Blamed

NC0202184293 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Statement issued on 1 February by the Kurdistan Ministerial Council]

[Text] The Baghdad regime's newspapers recently published a report about an attack on the Virgin Mary Monastery in Alqosh. The papers claimed that Kurdish forces had committed the crime due to the lack of security and stability in the Kurdistan region.

While the Kurdistan Ministerial Council condemns the crime against this monastery, it reminds everyone that Alqosh is still under the yoke of the Iraqi regime and that this crime was perpetrated by that same regime. As is known, the phenomena of robbery and looting have become the main characteristics of all areas under the control of the Iraqi regime. This has prompted the citizens in Baghdad to guard their shops and locations at night as a precaution against theft and looting, which take place within the earshot and with the knowledge of the regime's officials.

Opposition Claims Casualties Inflicted in Attack

NC3001191693 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Text] In decisive retaliation for the bestial attacks by defeated tyrant Saddam Husayn's forces against Iraqi citizens in the (al-Qumash) area of al-'Amarah Governorate, resistance forces launched a night attack against Iraqi positions in the area. They used mortars, rocket launchers, and medium-caliber machine guns. This report was confirmed by our sources in southern Iraq. They said that the attack resulted in the destruction of the tyrant forces' positions, four vehicles, and mortar and machine gun emplacements. The soldiers manning these positions were killed or wounded. The group returned safely to base.

Peres on Deportee Arrangement, Peace Talks

TA0302062993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Telephone interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by anchorman Karmit Gay—live]

[Text] [Gay] Good morning, Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres.

[Peres] Good morning to you.

[Gay] You returned from Brussels yesterday, and again you were presented with a fait accompli: You were abroad when the cabinet reached a decision which you later had to explain without having had anything to do with reaching it.

[Peres] As you well know, as foreign minister it is part of my duty to spend a large part of my time visiting various states and organizations. The meeting of the 12 foreign ministers in Brussels was scheduled a long time ago, and I am satisfied it was held and that I attended it.

[Gay] During your visit to Brussels, however, you were told that the cabinet had meanwhile decided to reach the deal with the United States.

[Peres] True.

[Gay] What is your opinion regarding this deal?

[Peres] I realized that we must reach some arrangement; we have been working on the details of this arrangement for approximately two weeks. Israel cannot afford to remain alone in the struggle, and we have to pay a price for breaking our isolation.

[Gay] Perhaps we should not have reached this state of isolation at all?

[Peres] Look, let bygones be bygones. We are working with the future in mind. It is pointless to constantly analyze what happened and what could have happened. The plain fact is that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] acted as it did. We had to react and our reaction took the shape that it did. Now, however, we have several simultaneous problems that we must address. One is our relations with the new Clinton administration, and it was advantageous to make our gesture in coordination with this administration. We also have a problem with European reaction, and I would suggest that we do not downplay Europe's importance. Most of our trade is with Europe, and from the political point of view Europe is also extremely important. Naturally, there is also the problem of the Arabs. We have a greater interest in the Arab reaction this time, because we want them to return to the negotiations. We can criticize them as much as we like, but we want the Arabs as they are—nobody can be changed here—to return to the negotiations.

[Gay] Most of the Arab countries, perhaps with the exception of Egypt, have rejected the arrangement.

[Peres] This is an initial reaction only. Doubtlessly it will be necessary to negotiate with them on this issue. The United States will have to deal with this issue. I assume that before coming up with its proposal the United States checked this issue with several Arab countries. Some countries agreed to the arrangement and some disagreed. Negotiations will have to be held with all of them in order to bring them back to the peace negotiations. It is clear, for example, that Syria is not all that concerned about the deportation issue. It is also clear that Egypt is seeking a way out, and the arrangement we reached to a large extent agrees with the Egyptian view. Egypt itself came up with a similar proposal, even if the details were somewhat different. Naturally the problem is with the Palestinians, who are not expressing their own position but are rather greatly influenced by Hamas. They face the danger of being influenced too much by Hamas. In that case they could blur the differences between them, and then Hamas would be in charge of affairs.

[Gay] Does this mean that one of the aims of the deportation, which was to drive a wedge between the PLO and Hamas, has failed?

[Peres] No. Unfortunately you are not describing the situation correctly. There is no question here of driving a wedge, because even without our involvement they are divided. There is a difference between the Palestinians and Hamas; we drove no wedge between them. The Palestinians are in favor of negotiations whereas Hamas is against them. We must fight Hamas, which points its rifles not only at Jews, but also at Palestinians. Let us refrain from describing ourselves as people who drive wedges, especially when this is uncalled for and untrue.

[Gay] Do you believe we will pass the next test, which is the arrival of all the parties for the next round of peace talks?

[Peres] I believe that all the parties will have to come to the talks, otherwise there will be considerable confusion on this issue. It is true that we can start the negotiations with the Syrians alone, but I doubt whether they will come to the talks alone. I believe that the Syrians and the Jordanians will attempt, at least initially, to help the Palestinians attain more achievements. The negotiations will last for several days and will probably be quite tense. All parties, however, will ultimately come to the peace negotiations.

[Gay] Meanwhile, let us return to a more burning arena, the Security Council. We entertained a hope that we could avoid this arena.

[Peres] I understand that the U.S. commitment is that no operative decisions will be taken against us there. It is doubtful whether such decisions could have been made in any event, for two reasons. One, Chapter 7 dealing with sanctions states that sanctions should be implemented when there is a danger to world peace or security. The deportation can be denounced or sharply criticized, but it did not pose any danger to world peace or security, and therefore the chapter on sanctions is inappropriate here. Two, the Security Council is made up of 15 members. I think that eight out of the 15 have already stated they will not support sanctions. This does not mean that the United Nations cannot take other steps that would be very difficult for us, such as posing a timetable. I hope, however, that this will also be avoided. The advantage in the arrangement we reached is that it proves Israel is sincerely searching for a solution and that it is attentive to international opinion. Israel is not hermetically sealed, and has now shown it is primarily motivated by the desire to return to the peace negotiations. After all, our action against Hamas and our consequent acts were aimed at preventing Hamas from destroying the negotiations and at resuming the negotiations after we have hurt this organization. Israel has proven its seriousness by means of this arrangement.

[Gay] Are the Europeans opposed to sanctions in the Security Council?

[Peres] Look, I came to Europe in a certain mood, and we worked around the clock to bring about a change in this mood. During a dinner with the 12 European foreign ministers I presented Israel's positions regarding the peace process and regarding what is termed confidence-building measures [preceding three words in English], which Israel is constantly implementing, and I stated that for some reason the Arabs are not appreciative of this. The atmosphere then changed drastically, and in the end the EC decided to continue its negotiations with us. This is a critical issue for the Israeli economy, exports, employment, and research. Naturally the Europeans said they will continue to monitor political developments. I must admit, however, that many issues did not receive enough attention, such as the economic subsidies in the territories [as heard], our rescinding of the law banning meetings with the PLO, or opening the territories for almost unlimited investments. These are significant changes which I fully described.

I also said in my opinion the Palestinians are making a mistake, because even when they receive something in the negotiations they later seem so disappointed that even their own public despairs. It is not a good idea to end every round of negotiations on such a note.

[Gay] Finally, I want to ask your opinion regarding criticism leveled on the prime minister during your absence. People are saying he is working alone, disregarding other people's opinions, and that he therefore gets entangled.

[Peres] I do not want to discuss any personal issues. I do not think it is appropriate for a cabinet member to address personal matters relating to any other cabinet member, not to mention the prime minister.

'Secret Clauses' Reported With U.S. on Deportees

TA0302114093 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 3 Feb 93 p 3

[Report by Amnon Barzilay, Washington correspondent Sari'el Shani, New York correspondent Beni Avni, Aharon Klein, and Aharon Barne'a]

[Excerpt] In addition to the 100 deportees who will be allowed to return to Israel as part of the compromise deal, another 80 to 100 will be allowed to return within seven months. The last deportee will be allowed to return on 18 December 1993, one year after the deportation. This emerges from clauses in the secret portion of the Israeli-U.S. memorandum of understanding which talks about cutting the duration of the deportation by half.

Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin did not insist that the Americans sign the document because he assumes the understanding will be honored by both sides in any event. In the secret clauses, the United States proposes to take action in the Arab world for fear that the deal to prevent sanctions against Israel would be construed by the Arabs as a one-sided move in Israel's favor. It is also noted that Secretary of State Warren Christopher will visit Israel for the first time in the second half of February and that Prime Minister Rabin will make a state visit to the United States in the second half of March.

Stressing the need for quick action due to the fact that the Ramadan fast starts on 24 February, U.S. sources said the United States would in the next few days intensify its efforts to resume the bilateral peace talks in February. They added that they would initially coordinate their diplomatic moves with Russia and later contact the sides participating in the talks. Political sources in Jerusalem estimate that the bilateral talks on arms control in Washington, which were set prior to the deportations, may resume on the original date set for them, within one to two weeks. [passage omitted]

[A related report on the deportee compromise by Hemi Shalev, Drora Perl, Miryam Fuchs, and Gid'on Keuts on pages 1 and 2 of Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 3 February adds: "Sources in the prime minister's bureau pointed out the positive and close relations created between Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, 'who spoke on the phone several times,' in the course of the formulation of the compromise agreement on the deportees. Rabin took great care to update Mubarak about his moves 'almost on a daily basis.' Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, too, conferred with his counterpart, 'Amr Musa, twice in a bid to consolidate the agreement. The sources note that the Egyptians were very positive in their reaction to the agreement."]

Rabin Adviser Denies Report

TA0302115093 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] The prime minister's bureau has denied reports regarding a secret clause included in the package deal with the Americans, according to which the removal period of some of the deportees will be reduced even more.

The prime minister's media adviser says that in accordance with the government's statement to the High Court of Justice those deportees who want to will be able to approach the appeal committees. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that two more committees are currently examining the deportees' dossiers, and they will decide to return those deportees who were improperly deported. This means that those deportees who do not appear on the list of the 100, but who were nevertheless mistakenly deported, will also be returned.

Our correspondent notes that the list of the deportees slated to be returned could be completed by the weekend.

Beilin Notes 'Positive' Foreign Reaction to Compromise

TA0202185193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin says his office has found that the West has responded most positively to the government's compromise on the deportees. Beilin said the Egyptian response had also been positive, and that while the Syrians had been critical, they had not linked the matter to the peace process.

Ben-Eli'ezer Defends 'Compromise' on Deportees

TA0202174493 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Interview with Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer by Dan Shilon on the "New Evening" program—live]

[Excerpts] [Shilon] Let us move on to the deportee affair and to the compromise reached yesterday, which was described by some people as a capitulation by the government and its leader Yitzhaq Rabin. Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer is here in our studio. Good evening, Minister Ben-Eli'ezer.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] Good evening.

[Shilon] Some of your statements at yesterday's cabinet session were highlighted by the media today; however, you are here to defend and explain the government's decision. Now I would like to understand something that many people in Israel perhaps are now asking. How is it that just one week ago it was forbidden to deliver even a glass of water to the deportees, whereas now they—or at least 100 of them—have suddenly become eligible to return to their homes?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] First of all, I admit that certain conditions developed that when the government first sat down and made its original decision.... [pauses] It is no secret that I supported and constantly defended this decision because I thought it was the right thing to do. Over the past week, we have been facing a totally new situation which we had not taken into account. For example, the whole issue of sanctions, which is not something that can be dismissed. For example....

[Shilon, interrupting] Could that not have been anticipated in advance?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I do not think that we could have anticipated that. We thought things over carefully, but even our worst-case scenarios, for example, only went as far as international condemnation of Israel. I admit that we never contemplated a situation in which the international community and the secretary general of the United Nations would move for a resolution to adopt sanctions against Israel. However, this is the reality we face today. The government now has to consider the big picture: first of all, our relations with the United States. This is a new administration which had to make its very first decision on the veto issue.

[Shilon] But the administration was not elected this week. We have known about this administration for several months. On the other hand, we decided on the deportations approximately 45 days ago. We could have already realized then that the new U.S. Administration would have a problem with this.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] Yes, Dan, but it was only over the past week that we learned about the danger and the possibility that the United States may have to choose between exercising its veto rights or letting the United Nations impose sanctions on Israel. This is something nobody predicted or took into consideration. Now, I clearly understand the problematic nature of this decision. I cannot conceal what I said yesterday at the cabinet session. I also explained the ramifications of how this decision would be perceived in the Arab street and by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], and I will not hide my very serious concern regarding the ramifications of this perception on the ground.

[Shilon] But where is the leadership capable of seeing beyond the next corner? Where is the leadership that can make plans, confront problems, and proudly assert that if the decision was right it will be upheld, despite the threat of international sanctions?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] First of all, we proved our leadership at the very beginning at least, when this government, as opposed to the previous one, took an unprecedented decision. During the Likud's entire time in power, it never deported 418 people.

[Shilon] But what did we gain from this?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] What did we gain from it? First of all, despite all my criticisms and concern, 300 deportees still remain outside Israel's borders and the State of Israel has not stopped its war against terrorism. Deportation is but one of the measures, albeit the most severe one, but still....

[Shilon, interrupting] But we will never be able to employ this measure again.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I am not at all sure of that.

[Shilon] But it was proven this week.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] We never said this, nor will we. We shall continue to defend our decision by declaring that we are leading the way toward a new reality. On the one hand, we will promote the peace process, while on the other hand we will continue to wage a war against terrorism. Incidentally, the 100 deportees returning to Israel will not exactly be sent to a summer resort. I think that they will be sent back to prison. That, perhaps, is one of the reasons they are refusing to return. We did not capitulate, we have dealt a blow to terrorism and we will continue to fight it.

[Shilon] I get the feeling you are having difficulty explaining the decision.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] No, I do not think that it is hard for me...[pauses]. Look, I already said all I had to say yesterday. The cabinet knows how to make decisions which are sometimes very difficult ones.

[Shilon] I would like to show you some footage we have of the deportees which was filmed this morning. This is their reaction to the Israeli Government's decision. [passage omitted] So they have rejected this agreement and while you may have attained a compromise with the U.S. Government you have not reached one with the deportees, the PLO, or with any party relevant to this matter.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] At least we have given the United States enough reason to realize that sometimes, when we have to weigh our priorities against each other, we are ready to swallow the bitter pill and make tough decisions despite all the attendant difficulty.

[Shilon] But now it appears that this does not satisfy them.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] It satisfies us.

[Shilon] But it transpires that we are incapable of acting alone. We are dependent on the United States, and the United States may again come under international pressure, or pressure from the United Nations. Now, I know that the United States promised us that this would not be the case, but we have already been fed that line many times in the past. One cannot discount the possibility that in one or two months, perhaps even less, we will be forced to make another compromise, another 100 or 200 deportees and the whole affair will ultimately amount to nothing.

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I will put myself out on a limb and say that this will be the test of the government's leadership?

[Shilon] Suddenly the government's leadership will be put to the test? Was it not put to the test already yesterday?

[Ben-Eli'ezer] I believe that the government proved its leadership qualities yesterday. Every minister voiced his opinions whether for or against in the clearest possible way, and the prime minister and the cabinet reached a very difficult decision. I do not imagine that salami tactics will work on us. We made a very difficult decision, and I believe that this time we considered all the possible aspects of such a decision. As I said earlier, the deportees remain beyond our borders. We were willing to take one step that admittedly does not look so good when I consider how it will be received at the Hamas level, and in the Palestinian street. In summary, however, when Israel faces a tough test and has to weigh various priorities, I think it had no alternative but to take this decision despite all the difficulty in the matter.

[Shilon] Thank you, Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer.

Palestinians Demand Assurances To End Deportation Policy

TA0302122093 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 3 Feb 93 pp 1, 8

[Report by Pinhas 'Inbari, Yehuda Tzur, and Yo'av Kaspi]

[Excerpt] The Palestinians are demanding assurances from Israel that it will totally stop the policy of deportations as a condition for accepting the deal on the deportees and resuming the peace talks. Palestinian sources in the territories told our correspondent that this has been the theme of the contacts held in the last few days between circles close to the Palestinian delegation and the U.S. State Department, and that the PLO in Tunis has been in on the contacts. The sources noted that the U.S. State Department immediately notified the Palestinian delegation about the deal with Israel. Egypt is apparently a party to the contacts, in view of Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa's statement in Cairo expressing the hope that an end would thus come to Israel's policy of deportations. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stated yesterday that his country has forever closed its gates to deportees from the territories. [passage omitted]

Shoval Urges Negotiators To Cut Ties With Hamas

TA0202204593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Zalman Shoval, Israel's ambassador to the United States, has called on the members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks to disconnect themselves from the radical Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad organizations in order to permit progress to be made in the negotiations.

Shoval said that he was convinced that the peace talks would be resumed soon despite the Arabs' negative reactions to Israel's compromise proposal to resolve the deportee affair.

Physician Served as Contact for U.S. Hamas Activists

TA0202171993 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Excerpts] New details were divulged today regarding the three American Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. The local point man for the American connection is a physician from Al-Birah who was detained during mass detentions in mid-December. The physician served as the contact man between the Hamas activists in the territories and the American envoys: Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hamid Salah, Muhammad Jum'a Hilmi Jarrad, and Muhammad Tawfiq al-Hijjah. He also transmitted the funds the Americans carried from Chicago. Our correspondent in the territories Udi Segal reports:

Dr. Mahmud (Rumahi) is apparently the conduit for the American activists to rehabilitate the Hamas infrastructure in the territories, which according to security sources was hurt by the deportation and the detentions. Dr. (Rumahi), a physician from the town of Al-Birah near Ramallah, was detained on 16 December, a day prior to the deportations to Lebanon. He was picked up as part of the large-scale detention wave of Hamas activists in the territories after border policeman's Nisim Toledano's kidnapping and murder.

Palestinian sources today divulged for the first time that (Rumahi) served as the contact man for the two American Palestinians who came from Chicago and were apprehended by the Shin Bet. Dr. (Rumahi) opened bank accounts which funneled U.S. dollars for Muhammad Jum'a Hilmi Jarrad, Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hamid Salah, and apparently also the third American, Muhammad Tawfiq al-Hijjah. The money was funneled from these bank accounts to Hamas activists in the field via other contact men, eventually reaching Hamas military arm's activists, the armed terrorists of the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam squads. (Rumahi) has been under detention for approximately 50 days, and so far, by Shin Bet order, forbidden to meet his lawyer. His interrogation has apparently led to the American connection, and in addition other intelligence information has directly led to the three U.S. citizens who were detained.

Within 24 hours following the detention of the Americans, 40 other senior Hamas activists were detained and more detentions are expected as a result of the recent investigation. [passage omitted]

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Hamid Salah was detained for an additional 18 days, rather than the 30 days the police had requested. Following the remand the court held an in-camera hearing in the presence of Colonel Shlomo Eisekson, head of the Ramallah military court, as well as that of the U.S. Consulate representative.

Muhammad Jum'a Hilmi Jarrad, the second American, was remanded in custody for another 15 days. Attorney Jawad Bulus, who represents Jarrad, claims that the charges against his client are unsubstantiated. [passage omitted]

The hearing in the case of Muhammad Tawfiq al-Hijjah, the third American, will be held next Thursday.

To repeat, 40 Hamas activists were detained, some of them directly involved in the money transfer affair. Today a Ramallah money changer, (Ribhi 'Awwad), was also detained on suspicion of money laundering the U.S. funds. [passage omitted]

GPO Head on Hamas Incitement Materials, Information

TA0302090293 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] The Civil Administration and the Government Press Office [GPO] yesterday displayed to foreign correspondents huge quantities of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] incitement material seized in mosques in the territories over the last several months. Among other things displayed were documents pointing to a connection between Hamas activists in the territories and in Britain and the United States. One document even relates to a $30,000 contribution by the U.S. Consulate to an Islamic charity society associated with Hamas. Our correspondent in the territories Udi Segal reports:

[Begin recording] [Segal] Huge quantities of Hamas incitement material seized in the territories was yesterday shown to foreign correspondents. Many of Hamas' anti-Semitic books and its propaganda material were printed in England and the United States. Among other things on display were receipts pointing to financial contributions from the United States and England to Islamic charity societies in the territories, from where the funds made their way to Hamas activists in the field. One receipt refers to $30,000 transferred from the U.S. Consulate in East Jerusalem to a charity society in the village of Burqa' near Nabulus. The funds were transferred over the last two months, but it is not clear who received them and what use was made of it. This is what Uri Dromi, head of the GPO, has to say:

[Dromi] The funds reach Israel under the guise of charity contributions for various kinds of charity organizations. It is used, however, for entirely different purposes. The seizure of the material presented here, and especially the detention of the two U.S. citizens who arrived here, will eventually reveal the real dimension of Hamas' foreign connections.

[Segal] The documents indicate that Hamas' medical network, which ended up with some of the charity societies' funds, constitutes part of Hamas' organizational infrastructure in the territories. The correspondents were shown photographs of Hamas activists armed with IDF [Israel Defense Forces] rifles in various heroic postures, various virulent posters and slogans and videocassettes in which clerics incite to violence and murder. We asked Uri Dromi whether the international information campaign was rendered an impossible mission in the wake of the great damage caused by the deportees affair:

[Dromi] Look, better late then never. This material was gathered over the last few days and we immediately displayed it. It is certainly extremely difficult to compete with the pictures from south Lebanon which are constantly displayed on CNN and other television stations. However, we are doing our best.

[Segal] Most of the materials exhibited were seized in various mosques in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. One of the books seized includes the most recent IDF military innovations in the territories, and serves as an instruction guide to Hamas terrorists. [end recording]

Political Sources Downplay Hamas Rejection of Proposal

TA0202175293 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Report by political correspondent Natan Gutman]

[Text] The statements by the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] deportees' spokesmen utterly rejecting the Israeli Government's compromise proposal do not dismay Israel. Political sources in Jerusalem today said that prior to the government's decision they predicted Hamas would reject any compromise, and that this rejection is insignificant from Israel's point of view. Although it sounds a little strange, the political sources believe that Israel stands to win in any event. From the operative aspect, the package deal will prevent the Security Council sanctions, and from the propaganda point of view Israel comes out the winner because it is being depicted as the party willing to meet the other side halfway and to come up with compromise proposals.

Israel is therefore not disappointed by the fact that its compromise proposals are being completely rejected by Hamas. It should be noted, however, that the PLO is also rejecting Israel's proposal, and this could harm Israel's main objective in this campaign—the resumption of the peace process.

As for the international arena, the United States has undertaken to prevent any UN sanctions against Israel. The statements made by Warren Christopher yesterday only strengthen this impression. The Jerusalem sources believe that the Security Council might settle for a condemnation by the Security Council president in the deportees issue, and this would be considered extremely convenient for Israel.

British MP's Denied Permission to Cross Into Lebanon

TA0202152393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the police have prevented six British members of Parliament [MP's] from entering Lebanon through the Rosh Haniqra border crossing, on their way to the deportee camp.

Our correspondent Nati Zilberman reports that the six MP's intended to hand the deportees a letter of support from British churches and to deliver them drugs and other supplies.

The Israeli authorities asserted that they had been denied passage because they did not have the requisite visas.

Future Envoy Says U.S. Aid Cut 'Destructive' to Peace

TA0302120893 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 3 Feb 93 p 5

[Report by Amnon Barzilay]

[Text] A cut in U.S. aid to Israel would be a destructive message to the peace process in terms of the extent of U.S. support for it, Professor Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador-designate to the United States, stated yesterday in a debate held at the Foreign Ministry on the eve of the arrival in Israel of Senator Patrick Leahy, chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee.

Leahy said a few days ago that a significant cut in U.S. foreign aid would be inevitable.

It was further noted in the debate that Israel knows that the approval of foreign aid by Congress is a long and tortuous process and that at this point the new administration's position on the issue remains unclear, except for general statements made by President Bill Clinton during the election campaign.

No Opposition Expected to U.S. Tank Sale to Kuwait

TA0302063193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Kuwait is purchasing arms from the United States worth $4.5 billion. The administration has informed Congress of the deal, which includes Abrams M-1 and M-2 tanks. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says Jerusalem is not expected to oppose the deal, but will seek guarantees that weapons are not transferred to Syria.

Police Detain Al-Husayni's Bodyguard

TA0202184693 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Our police affairs correspondent, Kayyid Zahir, has learned that the police have detained one of Faysal al-Husayni's bodyguards on suspicion of membership in a Fatah squad and provoking disturbances. He is also suspected of torching an East Jerusalem shop because its owner had opened the shop during strike days.

Peres Appeals to Palestinians To Hold Elections

AU0202185593 Berlin BERLINER ZEITUNG in German 28 Jan 93 p 8

[Interview with Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres by Charles A. Landsmann in Tel Aviv; date not given: "The Entire Matter Is Not a Game of Cards"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Landsmann] When your government assumed office, it promised to conclude peace treaties within nine months. When will the first agreement be signed?

[Peres] These nine months were a hope. But there are some points that do not depend on us. In my view, there are problems with the two most important negotiating partners, the Palestinians and the Syrians. There is a big difference: In the negotiations with the Syrians, we have an opposite party but not yet a solution at the moment. As regards the Palestinians, we have a solution but not an opposite party. The Palestinians are torn by strife, but are also threatened by a violent minority. There is no power in the Middle East that can keep this threat against the Palestinians in check. In my view, the best solution to the entire matter would be if the Palestinians accepted the proposal for elections. Because as long as you do not have rule by a democratic majority, the threat by the armed minority continues to exist.

[Landsmann] Thus, there is a possibility that an agreement will be concluded within the next six to nine months?

[Peres] In my view, it could be concluded even earlier. If the Palestinians were to hold elections—and they could do this in two to three months—they would have an authority that is based on the majority. At the moment we have a chaotic situation. If they want to put an end to the shooting, they must go to the ballot box. This is the only alternative.

[Landsmann] Do you believe that contacts with the PLO might defuse the situation?

[Peres] I do not think so. It is not our business to elect, nominate, or recognize the Palestinian leadership. The Palestinians must do that themselves. Therefore we have called on them again and again to hold free political elections. We will negotiate with whomever will be elected.

[Landsmann] Could a visit by the new U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher bring a solution?

[Peres] This depends entirely on him. He would be very welcome. I assume that he will weigh the prospects for resuming the peace process before he comes.

[Landsmann] If you could take back the cards that are already on the table, would you repeat the deportations?

[Peres] I do not play cards.

Foreign Minister Says Israeli Offer Shows Defiance

JN0202184693 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Commenting on the Israeli Government's decision to repatriate 100 Palestinian deportees, Foreign Minister Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir said the decision reflects Israel's insistence on defying the international community's will and the resolutions of international legitimacy. It also represents an attempt to escape the dilemma Israel created, reflecting its refusal to immediately implement Security Council Resolution 799 and its attempt to circumvent this resolution by fragmenting it at a time when it is aware of the need to immediately and fully implement this resolution.

Dr. Kamil Abu-Jabir added: Hence, the international community is asked to shoulder its responsibilities in a manner whereby no specific country can have the right to determine specific resolutions by which it will abide.

He said that the international community is also asked to adopt a strict single standard for adherence to the resolutions of international legitimacy and to seriously confront attempts at circumventing this legitimacy.

Full Compliance Said Solution

JN0202135093 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Randah Habib dispatch from Amman]

[Text] Reacting to the Israeli Government's decision yesterday to allow a third of the deportees to return, a responsible Jordanian source has said that the real solution to the problem of the Palestinian deportees is full compliance with Security Council Resolution 799, which demands their immediate return to their homeland.

The Jordanian official wondered why Israel is allowed to divide and circumvent the Security Council resolution, when it firmly insists on applying Security Council resolutions to the last letter in other regions, hinting at Iraq.

The official also said that the Israeli decision circumvents the unequivocal Security Council resolution, and represents an attempt to save face on the part of the Israeli Government, which, as he put it, has committed a sin by expelling people from their homeland.

Papers Comment on Israeli Offer on Deportees

Important Precedent Seen

JN0302101793 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 3 Feb 93 p 1

[Editorial: "A Small Step Down a Long Path"]

[Text] Israeli officials can say whatever they want about the deportee issue and on their decision to return 100 of them. They can say whatever they want about a U.S.-Israeli agreement on this question. However, what those officials cannot admit is that their acceptance of the return of one-fourth of the deportees is in fact a submission to various pressures, in which the United Nations, the United States, the EC, and Arabs were involved. Although this submission is so tiny, given the size of the deportee issue, it is significant and an important precedent if regarded as the first Israeli acceptance of an international resolution.

Among all UN member states, Israel stands as the most frequent rejector of international resolutions. Moreover, it is the only state that has not accepted any UN Security Council or General Assembly recommendation. Therefore, its agreement to take back 100 Palestinian deportees is considered a real departure from the familiar Israeli position. It sets a precedent which will result in further compliance with international resolutions, a practical respect for international legitimacy, and a comprehensive acceptance by this entity to become a part of the world, rather than a killer violating all values, principles, and conventions.

Some interpret Israel's acceptance of the return of one-fourth of the deportees as an expression of U.S. interest in saving Rabin's face inside the Israeli institution and as a U.S. effort to prevent the ultraextremists within this institution from striking at the extremists. This U.S. interest achieves a major goal, which is to make the Israelis see that they cannot continue to disregard the international community and the international legitimacy. This is an important achievement along the path of making the peace process a success. Acceptance of Resolution 799 opens the way for the acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338. This way, the established Israeli Torah policy against the United Nations and its resolutions comes to an end.

'Dangerous Precedent' Set

JN0302111493 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 3 Feb 93 p 1

[Editorial: "The U.S.-Israeli Bargain"]

[Text] Behind the back of the United Nations and the UN Security Council, and without showing the least regard for the prestige and credibility of the principles, slogans, and values celebrated in the U.S. capital, the United States concluded a cheap bargain with Israel, not only at the expense of the Palestinian deportees, but also at the expense of the principles of international legality, for which Washington had mobilized armies in the name of defending such principles in the Gulf and elsewhere.

Thus, the new U.S. Administration's first foreign policy action has been the consecration of the policy of double standards, violation of the principle of international consensus, and breaching the most basic human rights.

This was done, when it divided the issue of the Palestinian deportees, willingly approved the principle of mass deportation of citizens from their homes, and provided full diplomatic cover for that condemnable Israeli crime.

When Washington approves the principle of denying a Palestinian citizen the right to return to his home and family, approves Israel's adoption of such an unjust policy, and ignores that a resolution has unanimously been issued by the UN Security Council, this means that the new U.S. Administration has placed itself in the service of Israel's brazen schemes of deportation and displacement and whetted the Israeli appetite to proceed with such rejected colonialist schemes.

Besides, this U.S. position can only be interpreted as a generous U.S. reward for Israel's policy of refusing to implement UN Security Council Resolution 799, if not a blessing of Israel's persistence in defying the will of the international community. This legalizes Israel's right to behave as a state above the law and sanctions all its violations and excesses as long as it enjoys this free U.S. political cover.

The U.S. bargain with Israel, concluded behind the backs of the United Nations and the Security Council, will set a dangerous precedent regarding all UN resolutions related to various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a cheap bargain could also break the fragile basis of the stumbling peace process. It could also remove the what little remains of the credibility of the principles of international legitimacy in this part of the world.

Effort To Circumvent Resolution

JN0302113793 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 3 Feb 93 pp 1, 15

[Editorial: "An Israeli-U.S. Maneuver To Circumvent Resolution 799"]

[Text] The Israeli-U.S. deal to repatriate 100 of the 400 Palestinian deportees who are now in the occupied southern part of Lebanon at the mercy of snowstorms and without food or medicine, is a malicious attempt to circumvent UN Security Council Resolution 799 that stipulates an immediate repatriation of all deportees.

The Palestinian people, however, headed by the deportees themselves, as well as all the Arab countries that are directly concerned with this serious issue, realize the dimensions and aims of this suspicious maneuver.

Jordan, in particular, fully realizes the seriousness of this maneuver and declares its rejection of it. Jordan also demands that UN Resolution 799 be immediately implemented without further procrastination. Likewise, the Palestinian people, particularly the deportees, demand that Resolution 799 be implemented without circumvention, thus affirming their rejection of a phased or partial solution to their issue.

This U.S.-Israeli deal, struck with the collusion and support of some Arab parties, is a conspiracy against the peace process in its entirety. This is because the Palestinians and the Arab cordon states view the deportees' issue as an insurmountable obstacle to the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

The Clinton administration in Washington wanted to save the Rabin government from this difficult political impasse, but found itself implicated in it. This means it, too, found itself in a political impasse when its role, which is biased toward Israel, was exposed to all Palestinians, Arabs, and the entire international community. Therefore, the Clinton administration hastened to strike such a deal and prepare for such a maneuver in the hope that it will put pressures on the Palestinian side and the Arab cordon states in order to peddle this deal and circumvent Resolution 799.

The remarks made by Yitzhaq Rabin and Egyptian Ambassador Basyuni on Israeli radio and television that Egypt supports this deal are extremely regrettable. In any case, this Israeli-U.S. deal, approved by Egypt, will certainly greatly harm, if not abort the peace process.

Therefore, the cordon states should not soften their firm stand demanding the implementation of Resolution 799. Otherwise, these states will witness more serious mass deportations.

Buwayz Urges Further Efforts on Resolution 799

NC0202181593 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] In the first official Lebanese reaction to Israel's decision to return 100 Palestinian deportees, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz described the decision as a positive beginning to resolve the deportees' issue by implementing UN Security Council Resolution 799, provided that the process is continued by allowing all of them to return. Buwayz declared that failure to resolve the issue will have an adverse effect on the peace conference.

[Begin recording] [Buwayz] We have been informed of the results of the U.S. good offices in connection with resolving the deportees issues which include first, allowing the immediate return of some of the deportees; second, permitting the passage of humanitarian aid to them over Israeli territory; third, reducing the duration of the penalty for the rest; and finally, showing willingness to reexamine the legality of the penalties imposed. We regard these U.S. good offices as a positive beginning to resolving this issue, although we believe that the United States and the world community must pursue their efforts to attain a total and comprehensive solution to this issue in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 799. We urge the world community and the United States to make further efforts to carry this step further. [Words indistinct] the interpretation of Resolution 799, this beginning comes within the context of beginning to implement Resolution 799. This is what we hope for at any rate. [Words indistinct] further clarifications from the U.S. Administration about [words indistinct]

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Minister, following your contacts with the concerned countries, [words indistinct] how much time will pass until Resolution 799 will begin to be implemented?

[Buwayz] Permitting the immediate return of some deportees constitutes the beginning of implementing Resolution 799, on condition that this is applied to all the deportees.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, do you believe that this beginning of a solution will lead to the resumption of the peace negotiations in a ninth round?

[Buwayz] Certainly as the deportees crisis had an adverse effect on the peace conference, the future handling of this issue could have a positive effect on the peace conference.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, there is fear that this initiative might serve as a prelude to killing Resolution 799.

[Buwayz] Resolution 799 is clear and frank. It states that all the deportees must return. My remarks were clear: We consider what has happened as a positive beginning and step toward the full and comprehensive implementation of the resolution.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the Arab League secretary general the need to postpone his visit to Lebanon?

[Buwayz] In line with Arab League resolutions, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid placed himself at the disposal of the Lebanese Government in connection with the possibility that he might make some good offices both outside and inside Lebanon. We discussed with him the best methods that promote the prospect of implementing Resolution 799. At any rate, we always welcome a visit by Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid. However, with regard to the purpose of the visit, he and we will determine this issue in accordance with the developments of the deportees issue. It is true that the date of this visit was tomorrow; there were reports from Cairo that he was coming tomorrow. No, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid's proposals basically revolved about ways of implementing Arab League resolutions. Visits and contacts are just means of implementing these goals. [end recording]

Leaves for Damascus Talks

NC0302074293 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz left for Damascus this morning for talks with Syrian officials on the deportees issue.

According to AFP, Buwayz is scheduled to meet his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar' and Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam.

Birri on Israeli Offer, Need for Arab Summit

NC0302121893 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1000 GMT 3 Feb 93

[News conference by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri with unidentified correspondents after meeting President Ilyas al-Hirawi in Beirut on 3 February—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Birri] We discussed the Lebanese, Arab, and international situation. I draw the attention of the media and those dealing with politics to Resolution 799 not being an end in itself, but a means to rectify a situation. We should not forget that as far as Lebanon is concerned, Resolution 425 is the principal aim. It is now evident that the U.S.-Israeli deal was concluded to split and divide whatever remains of Arab unity and so prevent an Arab consensus, even in the Security Council. Resolution 799—the offshoot—should not be the substitute for the root, that is, Resolution 425. It is almost certain that this deal aims to split Arab ranks and make the Arabs go to the negotiations without a solution and thus give the impression that the negotiations, the resumption of which is being demanded now, will achieve one thing—the Palestinians' return to the territories, not the return of the territories to the Palestinians.

[Correspondent] Where are human rights in U.S. criteria?

[Birri] Regrettably, human rights will always be with the strong. Resolution 799 is an offshoot and for Lebanon, Resolution 425 is the root. We must always concentrate on this issue and emphasize the need to hold an Arab summit, especially now, because this turning, this concoction, of letting some of the deportees return, is meant to break Arab solidarity, no more, no less. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] The Arab League secretary general has proposed visiting the deportees camp. Will the Lebanese Government approve this visit?

[Birri] I cannot speak for the Lebanese Government, but on behalf of the Chamber of Deputies, I say no, because the Palestinian brothers have not asked to be in Lebanon. Lebanon is not a place for a visit by Arabs or anyone else. We did not let the French ambassador, the Italian foreign minister, or anyone else visit. The Arab League must try harder to hold an Arab summit and call for an Islamic conference if necessary so that this issue can be tackled in the Security Council and sanctions can be imposed. Since we are on this subject, I must warn again. There was no connection between Resolution 425 and other international resolutions—such as Resolution 242—before Resolution 799. Resolution 799 was a successful Israeli blow; that is, there is now a connection between Resolutions 425 and 799. It is as if we are asked to forget our resolution. This is a grave issue and they should not pressure us by throwing us the Resolution 799 bone. This resolution is a ploy, a bone thrown to the Arabs now.

[Correspondent] Do you believe an Arab summit can be held, especially [words indistinct]? You called for an Islamic summit during your visit to Iran, but Iran laid down some conditions. Is there anything new in this question? And how do you think there can be a confrontation if no Arab or Islamic summits are held?

[Birri] Regarding Iran, I do not believe there were conditions. There was a course of action. Supposedly, some of us would contact Egypt and Syria and others would contact Pakistan and other countries. I say that if the Arabs could not meet before the bone was thrown to them—that is before the offer to let 100 deportees go back—they must review the issue, because if Resolution 799 is not implemented, an idea will be given of what the result of the so- called peace negotiations will be with regard to the territories. This is a very grave issue.

Hizballah Statement Criticizes U.S. Over Deportees

NC0302094193 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Statement issued by Hizballah; date not given]

[Text] The Zionist entity has proved it is the first to violate international resolutions and laws. The usurping entity's policy is based on ignoring and disparaging resolutions and world public opinion.

The United States has proved it is the party with the least concern and judgment about implementing international resolutions. Although over a month has passed since the Palestinians were expelled from their land and despite their tragic situation, we find the United States working to dilute the issue and block a Security Council draft resolution imposing sanctions on Israel to force it to implement Resolution 799, stipulating the return of the deportees without delay or preconditions.

Washington pressed for a delay pending the Zionist High Court ruling, which came as a blow for everyone, and is now pressuring to promote the Zionist government's decision to take back a fourth of the deportees and reduce the term of the others' deportation by half. This U.S. act reveals that the Israeli decision was made on U.S. advice to hamper efforts to implement Resolution 799 and on Washington's refraining from using a veto when it judged that this would compromise its credibility.

Any international or regional move failing to force the Zionist entity to take back all the deportees without exception or delay is dubious and rejected, irrespective of pressures applied here and there.

The Arab group and all Islamic countries should be prepared and make haste to call for a Security Council meeting to discuss deterrent and mandatory sanctions against the enemy. Let Washington [words indistinct] the veto, which we believe will harm the its image, because it will appear outside international consensus and not committed to international will.

Deportee Spokesman Urges Talks Boycott

NC0302131893 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Palestinian deportees' spokesman 'Abd-al-'Aziz al- Rantisi held a news conference today in which he spoke about the tragic situation inside the Marj al-Zuhur camp amid the severe weather, the rainfall, and gales.

On the U.S. putting Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] on the terrorist list, al-Rantisi said: This decision will make us more confident and proud. The regrettable thing is that the United States has stooped so low. He asked: Were Charles de Gaulle and George Washington seen as terrorists because they sought to liberate their countries?

He called on the Security Council—the ball is in its court right now—to impose its dignity by making Israel submit and implement Resolution 799.

On the Anglo-French proposal to resolve the issue, he said: We reject this proposal if it does not lead to adopting the necessary measures to make Israel comply with the international will.

He asked: Washington would not split the UN resolutions against Iraq, yet now it agrees to split Resolution 799. Why?

Al-Rantisi called on Arab countries not to attend the Arab- Israeli negotiations, because the United States, the talks' sponsor, has proven that it is biased toward Israel and does not respect the resolutions of international legitimacy.

[In a similar report, Paris AFP in English at 1136 GMT on 3 February adds the following: "Al-Rantisi urged U.N. Secretary Butrus Butrus-Ghali 'to denounce the Israeli-American accord.'

["Al-Rantisi also called on Arab countries to 'refuse to take part in (Middle East peace) negotiations sponsored by the United States which supports Israeli terrorism against the Palestinian people. Anyone who listens to America or follows its orders will have to answer to his people' al-Rantisi added."]

Differences Among Deportees

NC0202205293 Paris AFP in English 1824 GMT 3 Jan 93

[Report by Yasmine Dakik]

[Text] Marj al-Zuhur, Lebanon, Feb 2 (AFP)—Some 400 Palestinian deportees Tuesday voted to reject Israeli proposals for the return home of 100 of them and a reduction of the term of exile of the others.

But several deportees told AFP they turned down the U.S.-inspired offer only because of solidarity with their comrades.

After noon prayers the deportees gathered outside their snow-whipped tents in a no man's land, where they have been trapped between Israeli and Lebanese lines since their expulsion on December 17.

The prayer leader asked: "Who is in favour (of the Israeli proposal)?" The men remained motionless.

"Who is against?" In a unanimous show of hands the 400 men showed their opposition to the Israeli offer.

The men then staged a demonstration, chanting: "No to the bargain. We want to go home. We want (U.N. Security Council Resolution) 799." The resolution passed December 18 ordered their immediate return.

The referendum was prepared overnight. As soon as the Israeli offer was announced late Monday, leaders of the makeshift camp toured the snow-blanketed tents until the first hours of Tuesday to poll the deportees.

Spokesman 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi then told reporters: "We reject this agreement out of hand ... If we accept it we legitimise the expulsion decision and 300 of us will be scattered around the world."

Not all agreed.

"The concessions Israel made are the maximum it could have done. Maybe we should have examined the proposals more carefully," said Muhammad 'Abdallah 'Afifi, a 32-year-old father of three from Bethlehem.

"In any case I'll stick by the collective decision. Even if it means we stay, then I stay," he added. 'Afifi owns a textile factory.

Muhammad Shihadah, 29, spent nearly 11 years in Israeli jails. He, too, believes Israel's compromise deal was valid.

"We had to accept because Israel made an enormous concession. The matter is not in our hands but in those of big powers and Arab countries.

"But of course I stick by the collective decision."

The U.S. inspired plan envisaged a quarter of the 400 men returning to jail in the occupied territories and the others having their exile cut to a maximum of one year.

Under the plan, Washington was to try to find a third country to offer the remaining deportees refuge once the first 100 left, and Israel would deliver supplies to them in the meantime.

Muhammad Hasan 'Adawi, the prayer leader at the Bethlehem mosque, denounced the Israeli compromise deal as "criminal."

"But we will only accept it if the Israeli authorities threaten to confiscate our identity documents which would mean we could never return home."

His threat immediately prompted a committee of legal experts among the deportees to examine the repercussions of such a possible Israeli move.

Islamic Jihad Spokesman on U.S.-Israeli 'Conspiracy'

NC0302082593 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami, spokesman for the deported brothers from the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine, has said that since the first day of the Islamic revolution victory in Iran, there was an attempt to pull the rug out from under the revolution to keep Islam from taking power there. There was also the military and economic blockade to prevent the revolution from spreading.

He added: After the failure of these plots came the direct U.S. intervention to strike at the revolution through the war led by criminal Saddam on the revolution. After the victory, the West advocated the notion of sectarianism to divide people and kill the spirit of cohesion with the revolution. He went on: The Islamic revolution's victory is a great deed by this people led by Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified, who had a renowned effect on the Palestinian cause and on the continuous call to strike at and expel Israel from this holy land.

Al-Shami said there is cohesion between the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Islamic Jihad in Palestine and that the intifadah has been the fruit of joint efforts by the Islamic revolution and the struggling people in Palestine.

Shaykh al-Shami and his brother deportees suffer in their camp, isolated by snow and rain, and bear the cold and frost while their food supplies gradually diminish. They find it difficult to obtain potable water and medicine runs out in their camp while disease spreads. This danger is the least important part of the dilemma. The paramount danger lies in the conspiracy hatched to scatter them through the U.S.-Zionist plot to return some of them to prisons and displace the rest abroad.

Minister Rejects 'Abd-al-Majid Visit to Deportees

NC0202170993

[Editorial Report] Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic at 1305 GMT on 2 February 1993 carries a 70-minute recording of an interview with Information Minister Michel Samahah conducted by Khalid al-'Ali on 1 February. The minister discusses media freedoms, government activity, administrative appointments, reconstruction projects, national reconciliation, and the problem of the deportees.

Explaining that the proposed media laws and regulations are meant as legal controls to organize media practice, Samahah stresses that the freedom of the press will always be safeguarded. "The organization," he says "deals with means of expression, not expression itself; ways of free practice, not freedom itself."

Expressing regret and annoyance that some media establishments are violating the media charter of honor, he says: "Those who go far in their wrongdoings against viewers or listeners will face a new situation and new measures. We may go so far as directly and forcefully closing their transmission stations on the grounds that they are abusing democracy."

Samahah does not deny different viewpoints within the government, but says this is a natural and healthy phenomenon. He urges citizens to demonstrate patience: "Do not expect the government to perform miracles and score achievements in two, three, or four months. The government is now effectively preparing for the stage of development and construction, and so it should be given the chance to finish preparations and move to achievement."

The information minister urges all Lebanese, supporters and opponents of the government, to demonstrate solidarity and rely on themselves in building their country. In this respect, he criticizes certain Gulf states, without naming them, for their failure to assist Lebanon: "We feel sad and deeply wounded that a few days ago certain countries promised to pay Turkey billions of dollars to help its military and defensive effort, when these countries still block a few million, or hundreds of millions, that we need to develop our homeland, although some of them financed our war and destruction."

On national reconciliation, Samahah maintains that Lebanon has made great strides toward national accord. He says reconciliation is achieved through common practices and positions, not merely through coexistence: "We achieve reconciliation through common action, through the return of the displaced, through reconstructing and developing Beirut's southern suburb, through developing Beirut's commercial center, through developing the entire north, through a unified position toward national resistance and the occupation of our territory in the south, and through a unified position on the deportees—one that serves their interests and our own."

Finally discussing the deportees and Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid's planned visit to them, Samahah stresses that Lebanon "will not budge on its position, no matter how the pressure mounts." He maintains that the problem is political, not humanitarian, and that it is the responsibility of Israel and the Security Council to solve it.

While thanking 'Abd-al-Majid for his concern, he says he cannot visit the deportees via Lebanon. He says: "The Arab League secretary general should hold all necessary contacts to solve the problem by returning the deportees to their homes. All our friends dealing with this issue are required to work to return the deportees to their land, return Lebanon's territory to the state's sovereignty, and implement Resolution 425. This is what we ask them to do. Anything less than this is an unacceptable compromise, and an encroachment on our sovereignty, our decisionmaking, and our land. Therefore, I do not believe that we will allow, and we will not allow—at least I will not allow—any humanitarian, political, or official figure to pass through Lebanese territory to see the deportees. This is my position, and as of this moment it is the position of the government, and I believe it will remain the position of the government because it is the position of the Lebanese people."

Interior Minister Interviewed on Army Deployment

JN2901181593 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 24 Jan 93 pp 1, 11

[By AL-BA'TH's correspondent in Beirut]

[Excerpts] Lebanese Interior Minister Bisharah Mirhij has affirmed that the Army's deployment in various areas is being carried out in line with a Cabinet decision and in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Arab forces operating in Lebanon.

In an exclusive statement to AL-BA'TH, Mirhij said that this deployment has proven very effective in controlling security and providing stability through the exemplary cooperation among various security organs. [passage omitted]

Speaking about an integral deployment plan on the secondary axes in the southern suburb and the control of weapons, he said: The presence of the security forces in the southern suburb is absolutely not new. Before the Lebanese Army assumed full responsibility for this sector, the Army had posts there. Also, the security forces used to carry out their regular duties and shoulder their responsibilities there. This new development has been received with enthusiasm and welcomed by various parties. Everybody was satisfied with what took place because spreading legitimate security is in the interests of everybody and in the interest of the homeland.

Therefore, what the various security organs are doing in this context is a natural and regular thing, as on any other spot.

He added: We think that resisting the Zionist occupation is a sacred national duty. Lebanon stands united on this issue. It is illogical that we should accept Zionist occupation of our territory in the south and southern al-Biqa'. Our resistance to this occupation is another facet of our adherence to our national sovereignty. It is also the chief means to restore our national dignity and achieve our people's desire to live freely and safely on their liberated land. [passage omitted]

On developing security cooperation between Lebanon and Syria, as part of the Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination Treaty, the Lebanese minister said that one of the missions of the current government is concretizing the treaty. This is because there is no alternative to this mission, in order to improve our security situation and face all challenges posed by the Zionist occupation. [passage omitted]

Preparations Under Way for Army To Take Over UNIFIL Posts

NC0302100593 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0815 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] According to our security correspondent, successful contacts were conducted recently between the Army Command and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] Command to consolidate the Lebanese Government's authority in the south.

According to the information, field preparations are now under way on two fronts: the Ghanian forces' withdrawal from positions in Ma'rakah, Yanuh, and (Jnata) and the Lebanese Army's takeover of these posts. Lebanese Army and UNIFIL officers recently toured the area. The delay in the deployment is merely due to logistical reasons.

Clinton Appointments Continue 'Bias Toward Israel'

NC0302104293 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 27 Jan 93 p 14

[Kamal Dhubyan's column "Hot Issues": "Who Will Assuage the Arabs' Worry?"]

[Text] Arabs are becoming more worried by the Jewish penetration of the new U.S. Administration and senior positions. This penetration signals that U.S. foreign policy will be under Zionist influence, which sometimes receded under certain Democratic and Republican administrations, but not to the point of a clash or divorce.

Clearly the new U.S. President is biased toward "Israel." In his campaign speeches, he voiced positions supporting the Hebrew state and upholding its military strength.

Clinton is indebted to the Jewish lobby that backed and supported him in the presidential election. He pledged to secure Israel's interests by appointing many Jews to decisionmaking positions, where they will work to extend financial, military, and political support to Israel.

The new U.S. President had no choice but to bring Jewish elements into his administration with the help of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) that directs the "Jewish lobby's" activities and monitors, plans, and directs U.S. policy in a way that serves Zionist objectives. Foreign policy toward Israel has thus become more constant than any other international policy.

The appointment of Martin Indyk as official in charge of the Middle East on the National Security Council reveals the trends in U.S. foreign policy and assures Israel, which was awaiting the appointment of new officials in the Clinton administration, that its views will be expressed. The result was in its favor. Jewish satisfaction includes the various people appointed to the new positions, Secretary of State Warren Christopher excepted. "Israel" does not regard him as a friend or even as hostile, but as a member of former President Jimmy Carter's team.

The Hebrew state is awaiting Richard Shifter's appointment as U.S. ambassador to complete the series. Then it can define the course of the "peace" negotiations and get rid of the guarantees and promises it made to the former U.S. Administration to pursue the "peace" process on the basis of international resolutions.

Israel gambled on change in the U.S. Administration. The negotiations were stalled and brought to a deadlock so that they could be resumed on a different basis, namely that of the "Camp David" agreements, which were reached during the presidency of Carter, who is expected to play a role in the "peaceful" settlement.

So the Arabs' worries are justified. They fear that the new administration will not abandon its bias toward "Israel." It will certainly not do so and this bias will be an obstacle to the "peace process."

Several Arab countries are trying to open a dialogue with the new U.S. Administration to undo the existing link between Washington and Tel Aviv and open a chink in this wall of alliance. Egypt is making this attempt to bring its views and those of the Clinton administration closer and to draw up a picture that shows not only the face of "Israel," but the other face of the Arabs, who have just national and pan-Arab causes.

The outlines of testing and revealing U.S. intentions have started to appear. Nothing will assuage the Arabs' worry except a U.S. declaration that international legitimacy is the criterion that governs international relations. Otherwise, the United States will remain the ally of "Israel" and the enemy of the Arabs, regardless of changes of administration. The methods might differ but the objectives will remain the same, namely "guaranteeing Israel's existence and security."

The Arabs themselves can assuage their worries if they distance themselves from U.S. policy and set up their entity with their intrinsic strength. Only then will they be respected. Otherwise, their weakness and divisions will keep them outside geopolitics and outside history.

Phalangist Splinter Group Calls For Leader's Resignation

NC0302140393 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0945 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] The provisional Phalangist Salvation Committee held a meeting at al-Ashrafiyah center this morning and reviewed developments concerning the Phalangist Party.

Our correspondent at the party center in al-Ashrafiyah is on the line to tell us about the meeting: The provisional Phalangist Salvation Committee met in al-Ashrafiyah this morning. The committee, comprising George Kassab, Alfred Madi, Emile Farah, Samir Zaghrini, Ibrahim Haddad, Georgette Anton, 'Adil Saqr, Khalil Basil, Joe Sarkis, and Farid Habib, issued the following statement: The Phalangist Salvation Committee held its first meeting in al-Ashrafiyah Building at 1000 today and noted the satisfaction with which its formation is met by Phalangists and the Lebanese public. It affirmed its determination to press ahead with its role of salvation out of its party and national commitment. The committee discussed the party's acute crisis and the latest issues. Despite its objective of salvation, it was surprised that the current leadership responded to its goal negatively and continued to violate the organization and harm the Phalangist Party's image. The latest violation was the leadership's revenge measure to refer all its members to an honorary council. On this, the Phalangist Salvation Committee announces the following:

First, committee members' referral to an honorary council is not based on sound legal reasons; it derives from the current party leadership's clinging to Resolution 6314, the legality of which was contested by the Advisory Council chairman, deputy chairman, and members and by most of the party bodies that enjoy representative status. Because the resolution is baseless, breaching party regulations and general order, anything based on it is also baseless.

Second, the current party leadership's measure is arbitrary and retaliatory, so it cannot be decided by a committee comprising the party's deputy leader and secretary general, both of whom are the arbiter and adversary at the same time.

Third, the announcement of names of the honorary council chairman and members and the reason for referral compromises the essence of moral dealings and dealings of comradeship according to the principle of secrecy. So it lacks seriousness in decisionmaking and confirms the leadership's spirit of rancor, especially as it gave short notice for issuing the resolution that was devised in advance.

Fourth, it has been the party's custom, particularly in fateful circumstances, to consult the advisory council about forming and motivating the honorary council. This has not happened in the course of violating the general order. With the advisory council chairman, his deputy, and some members having emphasized the illegality of Resolution 6314, the Phalangist Salvation Committee, as an exceptional case, asks the advisory council as the ultimate authority to form an honorary council according to the norms to try the current leadership represented by the party leader, his deputy, and secretary general.

Fifth, the Phalangist Salvation Committee renews its call on the party leader to resign to rescue the party from its serious crises. The committee also calls on the party leader to hold immediately a constituent conference grouping all figures, trends, and Phalangist officials to rebuild the party and produce a new system and leadership around which the Phalangist Party will rally and regain its national role, which the Lebanese people await.

Al-Asad Confers With Lebanese Foreign Minister

JN0302153293 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1505 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Damascus, 3 Feb (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz at 1130 today. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' attended the meeting.

Discussion during the meeting dealt with the regional situation and the peace process in light of recent developments.

Al-Asad Receives Former Jordanian Prime Minister

JN0202161093 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1555 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Damascus, 2 Feb (SANA)—President Hafiz al-Asad received former Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i at 1215 today.

Media Comment on Israeli Offer on Deportees

Commentary Urges Fairness

JN0202174093 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Station commentary]

[Excerpts] Gentlemen: The efforts of Israel and the Jewish lobby in the United States continue to prevent the convening of the Security Council and to draw the new U.S. Administration into a position that contradicts the principles of just peace in the Middle East.

The Israeli Government announced that it reached a deal with Washington whereby one-fourth of the Palestinian deportees will be allowed to return and the deportation of the rest will be reduced to one year. The deal also provides for supplying the deportees with humanitarian assistance in return for a U.S. commitment to obstruct a UN Security Council meeting and the imposition of sanctions.

For his part, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that the reasons for a Security Council meeting to discuss the deportee issue no longer exist, and henceforth concentration should be made on resuming bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks.

If we recall that Security Council Resolution 799 asks Israel to take back all the Palestinian deportees without exception—not one-fourth or one-third —and that the resolution holds Israel responsible for their safety, we will clearly realize that the U.S. secretary has failed to convince Yitzhaq Rabin to rescind his unjust decision and respond to the Security Council resolution and the will of international legitimacy. [passage omitted]

Rabin's description of what he reached with Warren Christopher as a deal does not require further explanation. It openly shows that the eventual objective is to circumvent Resolution 799, preventing the Security Council's effectiveness in taking necessary actions to return all the deportees. The deportees themselves announced that they are against any settlement that does not provide for their full return in accordance with the Security Council resolution.

This deal does not enhance U.S. prestige as much as it entrenches Israel's ability to manipulate U.S. decision-making with the aim of legitimizing its belligerence.

Arabs and many governments around the world raise these same questions: Will the United States continue to be under an Israeli mandate? Will U.S. foreign policy remain hostage to Israel's positions—even if these positions are quite foolish, and if they harm U.S. credibility, its role as a superpower, and its interests in the Middle East?

All observers agree that attaining peace in the Middle East will be in the interest of the United States and the international community. They also agree that attaining peace requires an honest and active U.S. role in implementing Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 which were considered the basis of the peace process. How can the United State play this role and lead the region to peace if Israel daily defies UN authority and Security Council resolutions, and interprets international law according to its wishes, ambitions, and designs at a time when the United States is unable to exert pressure on the Israeli leaders? Furthermore, the United States bows to Israeli dictates and looks for pretexts to justify actions that contradict right, justice, and international legitimacy.

The Arabs are not asking that the United States be biased toward them. They want a balanced position that falls in line with international law and charters. Such a position necessitates ending the policy of double standards, enhancing the power of the Security Council, and heeding its resolutions, starting with Resolution 799, which calls for the return of all deportees, and ending with Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, which call for ending the Israeli occupation of all Arab territory usurped in 1967.

Press Reaction

JN0302115393 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Press review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The reactions to the Israeli Government's decision to allow the repatriation of only 100 deportees were unanimous in agreeing that this decision was merely a deal concluded between the U.S. Administration and Israel with the aim of preventing the UN Security Council from passing any sanctions resolution against Israel. The United States has officially announced that the adoption by the Security Council of any resolutions to punish Israel for its deportation of more than 400 Palestinians is no longer necessary. The United States has thus made it clear that if efforts are made to ensure the passage of such resolutions, it will use its veto right to prevent a sanctions resolution against Israel under all circumstances. Indeed, the reports carried by news agencies yesterday indicate that the U.S. Administration has rewarded Israel for these positions, particularly since it was officially announced that the United States will shortly deliver to Israel F-18 planes as well as $300 million to be used to modernize Israel's military industries. So instead of being punished for its defiance of the international community, Israel is being rewarded.

AL-BA'TH adds: This U.S. position will encourage Israel to go further in its defiance and rejection of the resolutions of international legitimacy. Indeed, this will also prompt Israel to show further arrogance. It will encourage it to go to excess in its policy of aggression and expansion. The United States was supposed to have played a strong role at the Security Council to make Israel not only implement Resolution 799 in its entirety, but also to make Israel declare a commitment to implement Resolutions 338 and 224, as an inevitable step to save the stalled peace process, the basic sponsor of which is Washington. However, Washington's new position gives rise to pessimism rather than optimism over the prospects of the peace talks. It is certain that the U.S. Administration will not make any move to make Israel honor any commitments it deems undesirable. Undoubtedly, this cannot help the efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

For its part, the newspaper TISHRIN affirms that the U.S.-Israeli deal is, in itself, a clear circumvention of Security Council Resolution 799, which provides for the repatriation of all deportees, and not only a quarter of them. This deal, the paper notes, constitutes U.S. submission to Israeli arrogance as well as an attempt to legitimize an arbitrary and unfair measure, which is in stark violation of the fourth Geneva convention and human rights.

TISHRIN adds: The Arabs expected Washington to use all the means of pressure it possesses to make Israel return to the realm of reasonable and law-abiding nations, and not to see it succumb to Rabin's reckless policy. If the Security Council resolutions can be implemented piecemeal, as is happening with Resolution 799, then Israel will use the United States to promote the piecemeal implementation of Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, which constitute the groundwork for peace, and this will inevitably cause the collapse of the peace process.

TISHRIN continues: The U.S.-Israeli deal has not deceived anybody in the region. The Palestinian deportees have unanimously rejected the deal and declared that none of them will return home except through a collective repatriation in implementation of Security Council Resolution 799. Otherwise, nobody will return home, the deportees affirmed.

TISHRIN says: The U.S. secretary of state announced that from now on, efforts must focus on the resumption of bilateral talks in Washington. There is no doubt that the Arabs are looking forward to the resumption of these talks, but on clear bases.

The paper wonders: Who will guarantee for them the implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, which provide for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories, exchanging land for peace, and respecting the Palestinian people's rights? Who will guarantee for them the restoration of the Golan, Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and southern Lebanon in implementation of UN resolutions if the United States failed to make Israel implement Security Council Resolution 799, which provides for the repatriation of the deportees?

Meanwhile, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH believes that the Israeli Government's reluctant decision to allow the repatriation of only 100 deportees during an emergency session in violation of the content of UN Security Council Resolution 799 is a political and media card meant to be used by Tel Aviv to avert a confrontation with the world body and its institutions, and to also reduce the likelihood of the passage of a sanctions resolution to make it succumb to the UN resolution—a development which would set a precedent for implementing all UN resolutions in the near future.

AL-THAWRAH affirms that this Israeli move, as stated by Rabin and his environmental protection minister, Yosi Sarid, came as part of a package deal concluded with the United States, according to which Washington pledged to protect Israel and prevent the passage of any UN sanctions resolution against it.

AL-THAWRAH adds that this means that the U.S. Administration has backed down on the Security Council resolution it supported, which will consequently distort it, through accepting piecemeal implementation of it. Thus, the deportations will be turned into a triumph for the Israeli Government.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: It is only natural for the Israeli offer to be rejected by the Palestinians, be they the deportees or the masses of the occupied territories. The U.S. Administration might be interested in finding ways out for Rabin and his government, but it should not be at the expense of peace, the Palestinian people's suffering, and their legitimate national rights. Likewise, it should not be at the expense of international legitimacy as well as the prestige and credibility of its institutions.

Afghanistan

UN Suspends Aid Along Key Routes Following Ambush

BK0302055793 Hong Kong AFP in English 0540 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 3 (AFP)—The United Nations has suspended cross-border aid missions along two key land routes from Pakistan into Afghanistan following the killing of four of its personnel, U.N. sources said Wednesday.

The four were ambushed and killed Monday near the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad by unidentified gunmen.

U.N. staff will no longer use the main commercial route from the western Pakistani city of Peshawar to the Afghan capital of Kabul, which passes through Jalalabad, head of the U.N. aid programme in Afghanistan Martin Barber told AFP.

The organisation will also stop using the southern route from Quetta to Kandahar.

Two U.N. vehicles were forced to stop and stolen while using the Quetta-Kandahar route last week, but their occupants escaped unharmed.

In addition, international U.N. staff stationed in Jalalabad have been recalled to Pakistan, but Afghan employees will stay on and the offices remain open, Barber said.

The United Nations is to continue supplying aid to Afghanistan by plane.

However, the high price of such deliveries will restrict the amount of aid that can reach Afghanistan.

The drop in the quantity of food aid is likely to worsen living conditions for some 20,000 Afghan refugees in two camps near Jalalabad.

The organisation is considering appealing to non-U.N. drivers to resume deliveries by road.

Those killed Monday were Tony Bullard, a British national working at the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement, J.A. van Hoeflaken, of the Netherlands, engaged as a consultant on water resources, and their two Afghan drivers Zia ul Haq and Abdul Hadi.

Iranian Diplomat Involved in Kabul Shooting Incident

LD0202180693 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] According to a report, an Iranian diplomat was injured during today's clashes between the warring sides in Kabul. The car carrying Mr. Bahrami, a member of our embassy's staff in Kabul, came under fire while traveling to the Dahmazang area. He received superficial wounds, but the Afghan driver of the car was martyred.

Diplomat Reportedly Killed

LD0302115293 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] An employee and a diplomat of the Iranian Foreign Ministry in Kabul came under fire by members of [Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's] supervisory council [Shura-e Nezar].

Radio Message of Freedom's city correspondent reports from Kabul city that the supervisory council members fired yesterday on an employee and a diplomat of the Iranian Foreign Ministry in Kabul. The report adds that in the course of this firing, the employee of the Iranian Foreign Ministry was seriously injured and a diplomat of the Iranian Embassy was killed. No detailed information about the circumstances of this incident is yet available, and the Iranian Government has not yet reacted.

Kabul Residents Killed, Wounded in Missile Attack

LD0202162693 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The rebellious Golboddin Hekmatyar group today fired 75 Sakr-type missiles on Kabul. Quoting a responsible security source, a BIA military correspondent reported that the missiles martyred 13 innocent Kabul citizens and wounded 87 others.

The source added that the missiles hit a number of homes and state establishments, resulting in heavy material loss.

Army Foils Golboddin Offensive; Fighting Continues

LD0202163493 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The Islamic army today subjected the strongholds and heavy weapon position of Golboddin's rebellious group to air and artillery bombardment. An enemy transport movement was prevented.

A responsible source at the Islamic State Defense Ministry told a military correspondent of the BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY that the rebellious Golboddin group wanted to launch an offensive in the direction of Lataband pass. This offensive by the enemy forces was foiled by forces of the army of the Islamic State and the enemy was forced to retreat. Many of its troops were killed and wounded in this failed offensive. Heavy and light weapons belonging to the enemy were destroyed.

The source added that the army of the Islamic State made a sort of advance in the southwest [of Kabul], destroying a number of enemy strongholds. Since the enemy has no power to confront directly the Islamic state posts, it fired missiles at residential areas and state establishments. As a result of these blind missile attacks by the enemy, a number of faithful Muslim Kabul citizens were martyred or wounded.

The Defense Ministry source added that the forces of the Islamic State army are determined to continue mopping-up operations until the of heavy weapons trenches of the rebellious Golboddin group are completely eliminated and Kabul citizens are safe from these enemy missile attacks.

Clandestin Reports Fighting in Baghlan, Parwan Provinces

LD0202144793 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0905 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] As a result of a broad attack by mojahedin on Kiyani's militia posts in Baghlan Province, two strategic posts under their control were captured and many of their heavy weapons were seized.

A responsible source of the Baghlan jihad leadership [Amarat-e Jehad-e Baghlan] told a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent that on Sunday evening of this week, the courageous mojahedin of this province, commanded by Mamur Ghayur, attacked the military positions of the infamous Kiyani militia and captured two of their strategic posts in the Qaria-e Ghorbandiha region and near the center of Division No. 20.

The report adds that during the operation the mojahedin, as well as inflicting loss of life and materiel, captured 40 militiamen. They also seized four armored tanks, 13 Gronov heavy machine-guns, 10 [word indistinct] heavy weapons, 30 Kalashnikovs, four mortars, 15 rocket launchers, and a large quantity of ammunition.

Bloody battles have also taken place between two groups of the coalitionists in Charikar [80 km north of Kabul], and a large number of people have been killed on both sides.

Quoting reliable jihad sources, a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports from Parwan Province that a few days ago bloody battles took place between two groups of the coalitionist groups, namely that of Aqa Sherin and commander Fazloddin, the province's so-called Sarandoy [militia] commander, resulting in the deaths of a large number of troops from both sides.

The report states that four men from the Aqa Sherin group were killed by commander Fazloddin. Then, in retaliation, Aqa Sherin's men attacked the Fazloddin positions and captured 10 posts around Charikar city. In addition, as a result of an ambush along the Charikar-Jabalosaraj highway, more than 50 of Fazloddin's troops were disarmed by the rival group and detained.

The main cause of these clashes is not yet known.

Islamic Party Forces Seize Important Bases

LD0302121993 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] A responsible source of the Islamic Party [Hezb-e Eslami] supreme command told a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent that during their speedy advances in their operation yesterday afternoon and last night, the devout mojahedin seized the headquarters of the Jangalak factory and Khoshal Khan high school [south of Kabul] and are now continuing their advance in this direction.

The report adds that the headquarters of the Supervisory Council's 5th Khad regiment under the command of Rasul Furmoly, stationed in Khoshal Khan high school, which was an important center of the unholy coalition in this region, was overrun and thus the coalition forces' resistance on the southern Kabul front has been smashed.

The mojahedin on the southern front are continuing their speedy advances toward the Pol-e Artal and Pol-e Kozergah regions in order to seize the coalition forces' headquarters there. The report adds that, thanks to this successful operation, a large number of various weapons were seized from the coalition forces as booty.

Hekmatyar Interviewed on Battle for Kabul

PM0202112293 Paris LE MONDE in French 30 Jan 93 p 6

[Jean-Pierre Clerc report: "Afghanistan: 'The War Continues....'"]

[Text] Chahar Asiab—"I can give you an absolute assurance that the rockets falling on Kabul are not fired by Hezb-e Eslami." It was Golboddin Hekmatyar, the undisputed leader of the most powerful fundamentalist party in Afghanistan, who made that astonishing remark to us at his Chahar Asiab headquarters, 25 km south of the capital when the battle with General Ahmad Shah Masud's government forces was in its 10th day.

The man who spoke these words in good English is a rather small 40 year old, mild mannered, smiling, almost charming, carefully groomed with his very long black beard only faintly flecked with white hairs, well dressed with his light-colored parka over loose trousers of the same shade. That day, instead of his traditional black turban, he was wearing the "Nuristani" felt hat worn by Defense Minister Masud, his sworn enemy. He constantly told his beads as he sat. The room in which he was working was modest with just one luxury—a stove giving off heat which was welcome in the late afternoon which had become very cold. He avoided any wounding remarks about his enemies—Afghan or foreign.

But who is firing these death-dealing rockets on Kabul? Mr. Surqul Speen [name as published], an important Hezb-e Eslami political cadre, explained to us in an outpouring of words that those who are bombing Kabul are "the Marxists who still control the coalition of puppet President Rabbani. Those people are destroying the city so that they can blame us, who are the real resistance. Of course, we are firing on the presidential palace and the official buildings. But our fire is accurate to within a meter."

Mr. Hekmatyar was all moderation at a time when the "third battle of Kabul" continues to rage to the south of the city and, now, around Pol-e Charki on the road to Pakistan. What does he think of the recent proposal by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia asking all the Afghan leaders, among whom "Satan has sown the seeds of discord," to go to al-Ta'if to settle their differences by discussion? "I am in favor of a cease-fire and negotiation. I am opposed to this war which has been imposed on us. But the cease-fire can only be one element of a more general agreement."

[Clerc] What agreement?

[Hekmatyar] The present regime must be replaced by an interim government accepted by the majority of parties. After six months, elections should be held after which the definitive government would be formed. The parties would pledge not to use their weapons any longer. Moreover, a council acceptable to all parties will have to head the Defense Ministry and preside over the formation of our future Islamic army. Thus peace would be restored. [Hekmatyar ends]

This subject of the vital need for elections was also hammered home to us by Mr. Speen: "This demand should not frighten the Western countries!" Indeed, Mr. Hekmatyar, probably the only real "political animal in Afghanistan," thinks that this is his chance of taking power which so far the use of arms has denied him.

What is the Hezb-e Eslami leader's assessment of the first 10 days of this new phase of the civil war? "The offensive launched by the government forces is a failure. Their losses are very high. Their morale is low. They have lost many important positions." He called for a map of the Kabul region, dotted with little blue and red flags. He showed us the progress made by his troops to the south and southwest, which has brought them to less than 5 km from the presidential palace. He also showed the delicate position of the government forces at Pol-e Charki where Hezb-e Eslami, which currently controls the old road to Pakistan, has gained strategic access to the capital.

The same morning, we were able to verify the extreme tension in this area among the tankists of Commander Sidqollah, a Pashtun who recently went over to Gen. Masud against the advice of the leader of his party—the Harekat. Indeed, the government forces were surrounded by the Hezb-e Eslami forces in the former Pol-e Charki prison.

What relations does Hezb-e Eslami have with the Wahdat Shiites who launched a new attack on the Continental Hotel 3 km north of Kabul between Thursday night and Friday morning? "They are normal. We have had some problems. But at present things are going well."

What is Mr. Hematyar's perception of the current situation?

[Hekmatyar] Our enemies have only one ally—the (pro-Saudi) Ettehad. The group which enabled them to come to power, headed by Rashid Dostom (former communist leader of the Uzbek militia) has now declared its neutrality. The other Islamic parties are against Jamiat-e Eslami. They now only have the support of Babrak Karmal's Communists. [Hekmatyar ends]

Is he therefore prepared to invade Kabul?

[Hekmatyar] We are not even thinking of it! Our only aim is a political solution. It is up to Masud and Rabbani to finally stop holding onto power.

Does he still feel he is fighting a "holy war" against enemies who are Muslims, like him?

[Hekmatyar] We did not just fight the Soviets. We rose up for a free and peaceful Afghanistan, for an Islamic government elected by the people. These objectives have clearly not been achieved. The war continues.

How can Mr. Hekmatyar accuse his enemies of being controlled by the Communists when he has welcomed a number of officers from the Khalq faction of the former Afghan Communist Party who are among his best military leaders?

[Hekmatyar] We accepted them on an individual basis, taking advantage of the general amnesty. But forming a coalition government with them, as Rabbani has done, is an entirely different matter."

Finally, what does he think of the Western countries which helped him so much during the Soviet occupation, especially the United States?

[Hekmatyar] First, they helped Jamiat-e Eslami more than us! They favored the creation of a multitude of parties to produce a political vacuum. It is now clear that the United States prefers the Communists to the Islamic fundamentalists everywhere. Look at what is happening in Central Asia. They do not have the choice—it is the Communist Party or us. They do not like Islam: Look at Bosnia, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, and Tajikistan.... They even prefer a military regime to elections as in Algeria or Afghanistan. It is unacceptable to them that an Islamic government should come to power by the will of the people.

The interview ended there. On the road home in a deserted area, we arrived at a place called Siah-Bini, 15 km from Kabul. It was dusk. We passed three trucks each carrying a battery of 40 rockets. Four of them were launched in the direction of Pol-e Charki, making a terrible din. A little later, Kabul radio announced that 53 of those rockets fell on the city on Thursday. They killed 16 people.

India

MP's Resign, President Cancels Visit in Hostage Dispute

BK0302041093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] The Andhra Pradesh government has asked a senior IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officer, Mr. C.

Arjunarao, to rush to Narsimhapatnam in Vishakhapatnam District for negotiations with extremists who are still keeping Bala Raju, MLA [member of legislative assembly], and some officials hostage. A state government spokesman told the AIR [All India Radio] Hyderabad correspondent that Mr. Arjunarao will reach Narsimhapatnam by about 1130 this morning. The government has reassured the extremists that they will not be harmed if the kidnapped persons are released unharmed.

Meanwhile, two Congress-I MP's have said that they are resigning from parliament in protest against inaction of the state goverment in securing the release of the kidnapped persons. In a statement in Vishakhapatnam, the Rajya Sabha member, Mr. Donamraju Satyanaraina, and Lok Sabha member, Mr. Konutala Ramakrishna, said that they have sent their resignation letters to the party president, Mr. Narasimha Rao.

The president's proposed visit to Hyderabad today has been canceled. According to Rashtrapati Bhavan [President's House] sources the decision was taken so as to not to burden the state administration in view of the prevailing law and order conditions there. Dr. Sharma was scheduled to present the Sangeet Natak [Music Theater] Academy awards in Hyderabad. The Andhra Pradesh governor, Mr. Krishna Kant, has been requested to give away the awards.

* Prime Minister Blames Opposition for Unrest

93AS0426A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Jan 93 p 6

[Interview with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in New Delhi; date not given: "Rao: Bharatiya Janata Is Responsible for Sectarian Unrest; There Is No Connection Between Bombay Incidents and Babri Mosque Issue"]

[Text] Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao has accused the main opposition party of being behind India's latest sectarian unrest and has expressed his confidence that the worst is over and that his government can resume focusing on its economic program, which is vital to India's future. Despite the prime minister's proclaimed confidence that the Congress Party government will survive, recent reports have talked of the resignation of a number of federal government ministers.

In an interview AL-HAYAH conducted with him at his office, the prime minister has said that Bharatiya Janata has tried to gain support by provoking emotional issues, including the Babri Mosque issue. But this party will not always succeed in deceiving the people all the time because it opposes the entity of the state itself and does not oppose as a party countering another party in the parliament. The following is the text of the interview:

[AL-HAYAH] What is your assessment of the situation since your return from Bombay, which has experienced horrible sectarian unrest in the wake of the Babri Mosque incident?

[Rao] I do not feel that there is a connection between the Bombay incidents and the Ayodha issue. The situation has improved greatly in the past two days, and I believe that normal conditions will be restored without delay.

[AL-HAYAH] Are you truly optimistic?

[Rao] Yes, I am. The situation was extraordinary and not in character with India. Bharatiya Janata Party has exploited religious and emotional issues to incite people. But it will not be able to do this all the time. The party has exposed itself because it does not respect the law, the parliament, or the principles of the state itself. It is a party that opposes the state itself and not a party that opposes another party in the parliament.

[AL-HAYAH] We guess that Hindu radicalism is domestic. Is there Islamic counterradicalism, and does it have foreign connections, or does it receive support from abroad?

[Rao] The encouragement they [Islamic radicals] receive may not be direct. When radical voices rise abroad, domestic radicalism receives encouragement. We have information that local Muslims may have received money from abroad. But this money is spent on charitable projects, such as schools and so forth. We have no proof that radicals benefit from this money.

[AL-HAYAH] There is concern in the Arab and Islamic worlds over Hindu radicalism and the threat it poses to India's Muslims. What solution do you see for the Babri Mosque now that both Hindus and Muslims have turned down your proposal to build a temple and a mosque at the disputed site?

[Rao] The Hindu and Islamic organizations' rejection of the government's offer must not be considered rejection by the two sects. It means that the offer is balanced and that it is difficult for those who have taken radical positions to accept it openly. The majority of the two sects, even of all the sects, has accepted the offer, and I am confident that it will be implemented.

[AL-HAYAH] Hopes of success rely on the government's adoption of a balanced position. Yet, you permit Hindu radicals to pray at the site while forbidding Muslims. What is your comment on this condition?

[Rao] Regarding prayers, I fear that the issue is not understood. The government has not permitted or forbidden Muslims from praying. The issue has been before the courts for years, and the Supreme Court of the State of Uttar Pradesh has supported the right of the Hindus to pray at the site. Demanding that Muslims pray at their mosque depends on the court's final decision. Therefore, what the government has done is to back up the authority of the law.

[AL-HAYAH] When will the court make its [final] decision?

[Rao] We expect the decision within months. This has been my concern since I assumed power a year and a half ago. There is a law in the parliament that states that every temple, mosque, and church shall retain its position as it was in 1947, when India gained its independence. This is the law. The problem is in implementing it. The issue is not a political issue, but the problem of a party trying to cast doubt on the law because the Ayodha issue is different.

[AL-HAYAH] Excuse me for my ignorance, but why is Ayodha different?

[Rao] It is different because it has been excluded by the law from the outset. There have been 72 court cases connected with Ayodha. Regarding other disputed temples and mosques, there have been no cases; rather, there have been sporadic incidents. This is the difference, and we expect to hear the court's opinion in months. If there is need for legislation, then we will legislate in light of the court's opinion.

[AL-HAYAH] Hindu radicalism receives a positive response from the Hindu sect, and there are charges of police brutality against Muslims in numerous states. What are the steps your government has taken to eliminate the Muslims' fears?

[Rao] The government has already launched judiciary investigations in all of the areas where major incidents have taken place. The outcome of this investigation will show whether these charges are true or not. Meanwhile, the government is determined to regain the confidence of all sects, especially the minorities, in its ability to impose law and order so as to protect the citizens' lives and property.

[AL-HAYAH] With the presence of religious radicalism throughout the world, do you find that there is a challenge to India's secularism by Hindu religious radicalism?

[Rao] I do not agree that India is facing large-scale Hindu radicalism. If it were so, the Congress Party would not be ruling in several states. The majority of the people espouse a secular viewpoint. The current unrest that has been caused by certain parties and organizations will retreat in the face of the secular ideals of the majority of the people who will prevail ultimately.

Relations With Israel

[AL-HAYAH] There are reports from France about major weapons deals between India and Israel. Have relations between the two countries entered a new turning point, and how will this affect the traditionally good relations between India and the Arab world?

[Rao] The reports of agreements between India and Israel are false. India has established diplomatic relations with Israel and it will try to develop friendship and cooperation with it. But this will not affect our firm relations with the Arab world. Our understanding of and sympathy for Arab causes will continue and the friendship with Israel will not be at the Arab world's expense.

[AL-HAYAH] What kind of cooperation with Israel [do you seek]?

[Rao] What we seek is to take advantage of Israel's technology in agriculture, dryland irrigation, and solar energy. We have efforts in these areas, but Israel is more advanced than we are.

Kashmir Issue

[AL-HAYAH] There is the Kashmir issue and the recurrent reports about human rights violations there. What is the solution to an area where, it is obvious, the majority wants to break away from India? Does the United Nations have a role in solving this problem?

[Rao] Our position on Kashmir has been made clear repeatedly. Kashmir became an indivisible part of India upon India's independence. The law and order problems we are encountering in that part of our country are caused by a small group of people who have been misled by unfriendly forces from outside the border. We are confidant that this group will become soon persuaded to abandon violence. When order is established, we are determined to revive political steps in accordance with which democratic government is established. This is the only possible solution.

As for the reports of human rights violations, numerous parties are engaged in a ferocious propaganda campaign against us. When sporadic cases occur, we take strict disciplinary measures immediately. Ideal punishment produces a good effect. However, the possibility of the presence of large-scale human rights violations does not exist.

[AL-HAYAH] How do you explain India's survival as the world's biggest democratic country despite the economic difficulties, religious and ethnic unrest, and political instability it encounters constantly?

[Rao] India's ability to confront all the challenges it has encountered since independence is tied directly to the struggle for independence. Throughout decades, our leaders have underlined the values of patriotism, secularism, tolerance, and democracy. These ideals continue to be a part of the Indian people's makeup.

[AL-HAYAH] The Congress Party has ruled India most of the time since independence. But an evident change has developed in recent years. A series of weak governments have come into existence, and there is talk of early elections. Do you think that the country's political institutions have entered a different phase?

[Rao] I do not think that our political institutions need to change. They certainly need no fundamental change. Periods of instability develop in any democratic system encompassing party pluralism. But if the institutions are healthy and vigorous, the changes will have no negative ramifications. For us, we have provided stable government since our party assumed power in 1991, and we have successfully injected confidence and determination into our political and economic program. I see no need for early elections.

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle To Be Operational in 1993

BK0302103893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Indian space scientists are going ahead with the preparations for the launching of the first indigenously developed Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV. The 275-ton, 44-meter-tall PSLV will be capable of putting a 1,000-kg-class remote sensing satellite into polar sun synchronous orbit, 900 km from the earth by the end of this year.

Minister Signs Cooperation Accord With Iran

BK3001081793 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Text] India and Iran have agreed to expand their cooperation in the fields of agriculture, veterinary, horticulture, and fisheries development. Under the agreement signed by the two countries, India will provide training facilities to Iranian students in agricultural science and will also help in setting up an agriculture research institute in Iran. The agreement was signed in Tehran yesterday at the end of the three-day official visit to Iran by the union agriculture minister, Mr. Balram Jakhar. Mr. Jakhar also met the Iranian president, Mr. 'Ali Akbar Rafsanjani.

Army Operation Against Assam Rebels To Intensify

BK0302041693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] The Assam government has decided to intensify Army operations in the ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam]-infested districts of Dibrugarh, Tinsukhia, Sibsagar, Nowgong, Darrang, and Nalbari. In a note submitted to the prime minister yesterday, the chief minister, Mr. Hiteshwar Saikia, said his government will also declare those involved in heinous crimes as proclaimed offenders and attack their properties. The ultimatum to ULFA activists to surrender expired on Sunday [31 January].

Commentary Analyzes Rupee-Ruble Accord With Russia

BK0302124593 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Journalist H. Bhishmapal commentary: "Rupee-Ruble Agreement and its Implications"]

[Text] The settlement of the rupee-ruble exchange rate will go a long way in boosting trade between India and Russia substantially. It took many months to give final shape to the settlement. As in any agreement, there has to be give and take, adjustments and compromises. But it also goes to the credit of Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao that they could finally bury the problem inherited from the rupee trade model pursued by India and the former Soviet Union. The principal debt outstanding as of 1 April 1992 was ruble 9,871 million which at the last announced protocol rate amounted to rupees 313,770 million. The agreement provides for the principal amount of the debt as on 1 April 1992 being converted from ruble to rupee, using the exchange rate on 1 January 1990 as per the protocol. This amount of the principal debt as on 1 April 1992 would also be converted from ruble to rupee as determined by the 1978 protocol. The difference in the two amounts, as calculated above, amounting to rupees 114,500 million, will be rescheduled for payments over a period of 45 years. This rescheduled position to be paid in annual installments would be interest free.

As evident from the complicated agreement, it has reduced India's debt servicing burden to Russia by about 30 percent. Had India insisted on repaying its ruble debt at the exchange rate Russia itself had agreed to in consultation with the International Monetary Fund, its debt would have disappeared altogether after adjusting technical credits that India had give to Russia. Instead, a complex formula has been hammered out which reduces India's liability but still leaves it in debt. It seems India has been influenced excessively by political considerations and entertained unnecessary fears that paying the Russian debt at the IMF exchange rate would be interpreted by world bankers as nonpayment of our debts.

The justification for India having agreed to the retention of one of the clauses of the 1978 protocol, under which only the depreciation in the value of the rupee is to be taken into consideration while the rate of the ruble stays stable, has to be explained. This belies hopes that with the exit of the old order in the Soviet Union, which had claimed and enforced this advantage for the ruble on India in the 1978 protocol, this privileged position for the ruble would have been absent in the agreement which has now been reached with Russia. There can be no case (?leaving) the ruble stable, while providing for depreciation of only the rupee in the present agreement reached with Russia, when the ruble continues to take a beating vis-a-vis the dollar and the other hard currencies.

The gain for India from the present rupee-ruble agreement is that repayment as much as 110,000 million [no currency specified] over a period of 45 years at zero rate interest makes this outstanding virtually a grant. The new outstanding sum of rupees 313,770 million is near $10 billion, implying a significant cut in India's total debt profile. This should certainly help improve India's global creditworthiness. Indeed, the new development should more than offset gloom caused by stagnation in Indo-Russian trade, as present settlement does away with a barrier which had been impeding bilateral trade. The stage is now set for the two countries to explore ways and means for accelerating the flow of goods and services to its natural limit and for mutual benefit.

Commentary Examines Defense Agreement With Malaysia

BK0302044293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Commentary by T.G. Nallamuthu, All India Radio Southeast Asia correspondent]

[Text] The memorandum of understanding signed by India and Malaysia to bring about close cooperation in defense is a milestone not only in New Delhi's relations with Kuala Lumpur, but with the entire ASEAN group. Though India's eastern sentinel, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, are just a stone's throw away from Malaysia and Indonesia and not far from Thailand and Singapore, we have been keeping a safe distance from each other, also in defense. With economic liberalization, India started looking east also in defense. The move to have a memorandum of understanding with Malaysia should herald a better understanding with ASEAN countries.

ASEAN always had a lurking fear about India. With the proposed reduction of military presence by the United States in East and Southeast Asia, apprehensions were voiced that India, China, and Japan would try to fill the vaccum created by the big two. With India coming closer to Malaysia and with closer interaction and exchange of expertise and technology in vital areas such as the Air Force, there should be a better understanding of India's defensive posture. This should also in the near future lead to a common assessment of the regional security situation and efforts to deal with them.

Both the Indian defense minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar, and his Malaysian counterpart, Mr. Najib, hailed the event as a new era in cooperation in defense and otherwise. Both found very good scope for sharing the technology and expertise and even setting up of joint ventures. While Malaysia has hoped that India, with its long experience, would provide assistance in military training, logistics, and development of the defense industry, Kuala Lumpur has offered its expertise in managing insurgency. One short-term fallout could be fruitful collaboration in maintaining and operating MiG fighter aircraft which Malaysia has plans to induct into its Air Force. The Malaysian defense minister told me that should his country go in for MiG's, the umbrella kind of memorandum signed yesterday will be useful.

Iran

Relay of President's 31 Jan News Conference

LD0102192993 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1625 GMT 1 Feb 93

[News conference by President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in Tehran, with foreign and domestic correspondents on 31 January—recorded]

[Text] [Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. As usual, I am not going to make an introductory speech and will allocate the entire time to the correspondents.

[Unidentified correspondent] The price of goods and services were not supposed to rise in the year 1371 [from 21 March 1992]. However, prices did rise. In view of the government's decision to introduce a single parity rate of hard currency exchange, what measures will the government take to protect the low income strata of society?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As you have heard from the Majles budget debate, the budget has projected considerable sums to be utilized as aid and subsidies in order to protect the deprived and the low income strata. As a result, the negative effect of single parity exchange rate will be minimized.

[Unidentified correspondent] There is talk that a spokesman for the government will be appointed. Does the president have anyone in mind to assume this role? I would like to add that a spokesman can facilitate contact between officials, and particularly between the government and the people through the mass media. I also would like to point out that not having a government spokesman results in different views being heard on various policies, which leads to uncertainty.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Dr. [Hasan] Habibi remains the government's spokesman. He has not given many interviews lately. We have stressed that he should hold more interviews with the mass media.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, we see growing trade between the United States and Iran. The United States is now—at least American companies are—buying Iranian oil. American products are being sold in Iran, either through the Emirates [UAE] or directly. We have a new administration in Washington. Do you think this might be the time to stop some of the anti-American rhetoric and begin to explore a way to open communications between the United States and Iran?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] These slogans have not come into being for no reason. They have their roots in actions that have usually been committed by the U.S. Government against the Islamic revolution or against some Islamic countries. When our people feel that the Americans do not have a hostile position regarding the revolution and Islam, then the people may also reconsider their slogans. However, under the present circumstances, when we still witness hostile actions by the United States, I do not see any grounds for this reconsideration.

Regarding trade, trade between Iran and America has never completely stopped. It has been reduced at times, and at times it has been increased. It depends on the two sides' needs. When the two sides have a special need, they purchase what they desire. This does not bring about any basic change in the conditions of the relations between the two countries. We have repeatedly announced that everything depends on America correcting her policies toward the Moslems, especially towards the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, there are two German questions involved up in Germany—two from Germany. First, a German magazine writes that—this week—that Iran got four atomic bombs. The second question is that there is a German in prison on death row, and he is accused of spying for Iraq. Could you tell us some information about that? Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Basically, we regard nuclear weapons as inhumane weapons. In our general policies, it is not acceptable under any circumstances to harm humanity by means of nuclear weapons or any other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons and the like. We have never tried and will never try to acquire nuclear weapons. What we are pursuing is to make peaceful use of nuclear power, and this is something that is also confirmed by relevant international centers. This propaganda blackmail [previous word in French] that has recently begun about nuclear weapons and the like, it is clear that it is based on political motives, not on reality.

Regarding the accused German, as far as I know, he still has another stage to his court case. His file should go to the Supreme Court. They will make the decision.

[Unidentified correspondent] With greetings, Mr. President. In studying the press, one becomes aware that governmental and religious leaders of Iran are worried and concerned about satellites and satellite television programs. If the Iranian Government firmly believes that Iranian society is attached to the Islamic faith and principles and that the Islamic community refrains from western culture, what is the cause of all this concern?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Of course, the sort of concern that you mention does not exist in our society. We are sure that our people—with full belief and assurance—are committed to their Islamic principles. A warning is being expressed here for the people to know that programs are for deviating the young generation, are anti-moral deviating propaganda, and people should keep themselves aloof. It is correct for the country's officials to be concerned with the maintenance of the people in advance.

We are witnessing many very serious difficulties caused by the western world, particularly those that western youth are entangled in. You are constantly aware of the difficulties faced by families who have no bread winners, children without responsible mothers or fathers, helpless women without husbands, and issues such as AIDS. These have filled your own media. Your own thinkers are concerned. In any country, concern should exist among officials for safeguarding moral and cultural issues. Of course, we cannot say that all the people, without exception, have internal safeguards. There are definitely some people who are influenced, and we have to think of them.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, the Islamic Republic of Iran is well on its way to become the most important power—also military power—in this area. Where are the enemies?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The question is more or less similar to the last one. If you say Iran is strong in the region—from the aspect of internal power—we accept this. This very thing was proven during the eight year war, that through depending on people and with faith we can defend ourselves. If it is meant, however, that we have extraordinary plans for rearmament, this is categorically denied.

You see our budget this year. From our budget of 54 trillion (?rials), only 850 million is allocated to our military forces. Official figures approved by international centers, state that Iran spends 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product for defense purposes. You know how much our neighboring countries buy arms. The latest figure, announced a few days ago, was of the sale of British Tornado fighters to Saudi Arabia. This equals two to three years of our total defense expenditures. So the propaganda is pursued with political and isolating goals.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. President, I am a reporter from the Islamic Republic daily. I have two questions. The first concerns the government's five-year plan. Considering that the plan was drawn up during the period of the holy defense [war with Iraq], how do you assess this plan, and what are the main features of the government's second five-year plan?

My second question is: Bearing in mind that the government currently has economic relations and contacts with only a limited number of European countries, does it have any plans to extend these relations? I thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Concerning the five-year plan, we have implemented approximately three years of it. The plan was ratified toward the end of the year, and so time was lost in the first year. The next year still remains. Our assessment is that the plan has been implemented in a desirable manner and that, in spite of the fact that it was drawn up during the war period, it was a realistic plan. This was one of its features.

As to the second plan, we used the experiences of the first plan, as well as the new resources we gained during this period. We shall have a stronger and more extensive plan. Credit in both foreign exchange and the rial is much greater, and our executive facilities have improved much more. We think that the second plan is a continuation of the first plan but is more extensive and comprehensive.

As to cooperation with other countries—your second question—our policy is not to limit ourselves to a number of countries. This has come about in a natural manner. If more grounds for cooperation develop with regard to other European countries, in principle we see no objections to this. We can widen our cooperation.

[ITAR-TASS correspondent] Mr. President, could you please clarify the official position of the Iranian Government on the events in Tajikistan and the stand of Russia and Uzbekistan in this regard? Also, I would like to ask you to comment on the decision of the president of Kyrgyzstan to opening the Kyrgyz Embassy in Jerusalem?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding Tajikistan, we are truly sorry about the events that are taking place in that country. Instead of reconstructing their country, the popular forces have become divided and are destroying the country. Events are taking place contrary to the interests of the people. We, however, will not intervene. Our policy is not intervention, but we do express our opinion.

Regarding recognition of Israel, we oppose it by any Islamic government or by the people of any Muslim or Third World country, from whom we expect adoption of just policies. We believe that Israel is an illegitimate government, and must be isolated by all countries so that the just rights of the oppressed Palestinian people may be returned to them.

[Unidentifed correspondent, in English] Although Saudi-Iranian relations are better now, Saudi Arabia still discriminates against the Shiite citizens there. How do you see the solution for that?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] If any discrimination exists, it must certainly be removed. In any country, governments must treat their people justly. We express our opinions in such cases, wherever they may occur. We hope that our cooperation with Saudi Arabia will grow, just as the policy of improving relations is growing.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, Iraq seems to be a destabilizing factor in this part of the world. In what way can Iran participate in the world's efforts to get rid of Saddam Husayn?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We accept that the Iraqis—that is the Ba'th party of Iraq—are the cause of instability in the region; in their aggression in the past against the Islamic Republic of Iran; in their aggression against Kuwait; and also in the way they treat their own people. However, we do not believe that the solution lies in a power such as America taking control of the fate of the people of Iraq and the region.

If you see that we do not actively cooperate in the action taken by America, it is because of our suspicion of the goals of the Americans and Westerners in this regard. We are worried about the cause of instability—which is now confined to the Ba'th Party of Iraq—falling into the hands of bigger powers, which is more possible. If there really was a plan to make the people take control of their own fate, while preserving Iraq as a whole, Iran would actively cooperate.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. President, after expressing my thanks, I would like to ask you two questions. In his recent speech, the eminent leader condemned the compromising remarks of some irresponsible individuals and said that Iran would under no circumstances reconcile with the arrogant powers. Could you please tell us if the government has any plans to censure such remarks, and would you outline the system's official policy?

My second question concerns the adoption of a single rate of foreign exchange. It seems that the implementation of that issue would lead to an upsurge in inflation. What does the government have in mind in this regard?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding the first question, the government's policy is always compatible with that of the leadership. In principle, such policies of our system are adopted by the leader of the revolution, and he himself had said in his speech that the positions of the government, of his eminence himself, and the president are the same. Of course, the issue concerns the fact that we are always opposed to arrogant policies; that was a very correct remark. We oppose the arrogance—which is tantamount to violation, hegemony, and bullying—with all our revolutionary spirit. We struggle against arrogant policy wherever it may be.

In his remarks, his eminence criticized some newspapers that often improperly state that the system has become distant from the aspirations of the revolution and its original policies. That was a just remark. I, myself, deplore them. Since its first day, the Islamic Republic has based its policy on that principle and will continue to do so. We will be united.

Regarding concern about inflation in 1371, I have said on many occasions that there is no cause for concern. Adopting a single rate of foreign exchange is a different issue from that of readjustment. Our budget has forecast payments in rials for what used to be paid for in foreign exchange. The quotas of basic goods continue. Subsidies in rials are allocated where needed, and foreign exchange has undoubtedly been forecast for imports.

Readjustment is also, without a doubt, taking its course. Since the beginning of the first five-year plan, we have had an annual readjustment of 20 percent. he same will apply in 1371. We will continue to maintain the inflation rate at the same level as the previous years, until the end of the readjustment period. We will also take care that no harm is suffered by the people. At the same time, the readjustment plans will also continue in accordance with the forecast plan.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, you said that the United States has to end its hostility towards Iran to enable the establishment of relations. What specifically does Bill Clinton—President Bill

Clinton—have to do to enable the establishment of relations, and would you personally like to see those relations established?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I thought that my answer was sufficient. I said that the severance of ties was caused by America's arrogant policies. If those policies are amended, we see no reason for continuing with severed relations. Of course, that is a difficult task for America. For instance, why are our assets in America still frozen? I believe that no American would be able to give us a proper answer to that question. Why is it that the American's unjust support for Israel—against the oppressed Palestinian people—is continuing? Or, why is there America's double-standard policy of intervening in the case of Iraq and Kuwait with such speed, but failing to take seriously the situation in Bosnia where so much oppression and tragedy is taking place. Why is it so? There are many similar questions. If such issues are indeed corrected some day, then I believe it would not be wrong to talk about relations. Such conditions, however, are seriously incompatible with public opinion and with the principled aims of our revolution.

[Unidentified moderator] Mr. Bihadi of RESALAT newspaper.

[Bihadi] Mr. Rafsanjani, since the country's general budget for the year 1371 has been approved by the Majles—in which certain amendments have been made on development activities, education, training, deprived areas, and higher education—how does Your Excellency view the various aspects of the budget? What is your analysis of the relationship between the Majles and the government?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The budget debates at the Majles were very good. They were both serious and realistic. As you saw, the Majles finally voted for a ceiling of credit allocations at the level set by the government. This was despite the lengthy discussions about revenues being unrealistic and expenditures being extravagant in places. Finally, however, after a great deal of discussion, the deputies reached the same conclusion and voted in agreement with the government's views.

There were some changes that we consider the right of the Majles. There is nothing wrong with this. The Majles is, after all, a decision-making center, and it changes certain points. No substantial change was made in the country's budget, however. We are very satisfied with what happened.

[Bihadi] My next question is about the country's administrative situation. Since administrative bureaucracy is one of fundamental problems of the executive branch, what action has been taken to change the administrative system? What is Your Excellency's view on expediting those actions?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Perhaps, you are in touch with the news from the Supreme Administrative Council. We are regularly at work there. An active secretariat is at work. The Supreme Council has so far made numerous decisions and announced them. That will be accelerated once more dossiers are ready.

[Muhammad Sadeq Hosayni, Monte Carlo Radio] With greetings, Your Excellency Mr. Rafsanjani. Recently, a number of your colleagues, with different political responsibilities, stated that they had no fear of holding talks with other countries and that holding a dialogue with a country did not mean agreeing with that country's stance. My first question is: Recently, the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak invited Iranian officials to hold talks. Are you, or other officials in the Islamic Republic, prepared to hold a dialogue with Egypt? Second, does the issue of holding talks—and not establishing relations—include America, too? Third, what would Your Excellency's stance be if Iran was invited to participate in the Middle East peace talks?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding America, I have already given my answer and will not repeat it. Regarding Egypt, the correct thing would be to establish cooperation and relations with the Egyptian Government. It is a large Muslim country with a long-established cultural heritage. The reason we severed relations was the Egyptian initiative—that is the Egyptian Government's initiative—with regard to Camp David. Camp David was a major blow to the anti- Israeli front, which created discord. Many Arab countries and Egypt's neighbors also broke off their relations. In our view, that flaw has still not been corrected, and we see no reason for condoning a situation where Egypt continues to be the ringleader. We believe it would also be better for the Egyptians to adopt a better stance with regard to Israel. If this happens, we will open up our policy toward Egypt, with pleasure, and will cooperate with them. Of course, there is no problem in talking with the Egyptians. We must, and will, continue talking to Egypt. Even now, we are holding talks with them in several places in international forums.

Regarding the Middle East peace talks, our policy is categorical insofar as Israel remains an illegitimate government. We also believe that Israel will give no concessions to the Arabs and the Palestinians in these talks. Therefore, we will not participate even if invited.

[Jassim Sulhi, KUNA correspondent, in English] Mr. President, how do you evaluate your relations with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] in the light of your long-standing dispute with the United Arab Emirates regarding the three islands in the Gulf—especially since the UAE has filed a complaint against Iran in the United Nations and the second round of talks, which was supposed to held in Tehran, never took place?

My second question, Mr. President, if I may, is about Bosnia-Hercegovina. What is Iran planning to do when the deadline, which the Islamic countries have given for the UN intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina, lapses without anything happening? Thank you very much, Mr. President.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] About the southern littoral states of the Persian Gulf, we pursue a policy of cooperation and rapprochement. We are eager to be sincere friends with them in all matters. We believe this will be in the interest of the region and of global peace. Unfortunately, we see some provocations in the region. The old issue of the three islands is being raised again with vague excuses. We hope this problem will be amicably resolved, thanks to the aptitude of our neighboring countries. Iran thinks the solution lies in bilateral talks. For this same reason, we have dispatched a delegation to the UAE. They have held talks, and we are ready to resume the second round of the talks. We hope our brothers in the Persian Gulf region would appreciate that it will not be in the interest of the region to see tension.

Regarding Bosnia-Hercegovina, we are deeply concerned. We see that the European powers are not serious to intervene effectively to end this tragedy. The Islamic Republic cannot do much in practice there. We have done what we are capable of so far and shall continue to do so. The fundamental work should be undertaken by the United Nations. It should deal with the problem seriously. This tragedy is a disgrace to the major powers and particularly the European states.

[Moderator] ANATOLIA news agency, Turkey.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Rafsanjani, as you know, last week there were some undesirable and upsetting incidents in Turkey in connection with the murder of a Turkish reporter. Will these incidents affect Mr. Habibi's trip to Turkey next month and the good relations between Iran and Turkey?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] About Turkey, the policy of the Iranian and Turkish Governments is about more cooperation. However, we feel that there are powers in Turkey who are opposed to Turkish-Iranian cooperation, who create incidents, engage in propaganda blackmail, and create an adverse atmosphere to weaken that cooperation. In my view, the decision of the two governments should not be influenced by such incidents. I hope that they do not and that we will continue the trend we have started.

[Moderator] Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.

[Unidentified correspondent] In the name of God. Mr. Rafsanjani, in view of the implementation of the project to have a single foreign exchange rate in the 1372 [beginning 21 March 1993] general budget of the country and because the implementation of this project will affect other economic activities, please let us know how the government intends to coordinate its economic policies in various fields, such as amending the regulations concerning imports and exports and policies regarding private manufacturing or other fields. Has the government got any special timing in mind, or will this policy be implemented gradually?

My second question is also in the same area. In view of the fact that the policy of Your Excellency's government from the beginning has been the slogan of supporting production and because one of the aims in the creation of a single foreign exchange rate is to support domestic products—whether in industrial or agricultural sectors—please let us know what the policies of the government are for supporting domestic products. Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding the phasing and the order of the implementation of the plan, as you know, for the past two or three years our work has been based on plans. Planning means that everything has a definite time and order, and allocations are also known and will be implemented on that basis. The first five-year plan was implemented on time to a great extent—nearly 90 percent of it. We hope that the second plan will be even more precise. Everything will be organized and implemented according to its proper time.

Regarding the policy of supporting production, we still have the same slogan and the same policy. We believe that the salvation of our country's economy is in supporting production. Fortunately, we have been successful. During these three years of the plan, on average, we have had 10 percent growth in our gross product. World economists know that this is a very good figure and a very satisfactory rate. Only a few countries in the world have such as rate of growth. Supporting producers is among our serious policies. A great deal of support is given to production in Iran. You know that fuel, transportation, and manpower in Iran all benefit from government subsidies.

If you compare a production plant in Iran and one in Turkey you will see how much the Iranian plant receives support from the government by comparison: cheap fuel—cheap energy in general; workers whose wages have been kept low due to government subsidies in comparison; transportation that is carried out with cheap or nearly free fuel; and other subsidies for infrastructure.

We have also made another decision to impose a tax of about 20 percent on imported goods in favor of domestic products. This will be implemented beginning next year. There will also be a great deal of administrative and managerial support.

[Moderator] Katayun Ghazi, THE NEW YORK TIMES.

[Ghazi] Hello, Mr. Rafsanjani. Please tell me the legal situation of Mr. Milton Mayer, who was recently arrested in Tehran. My second question is: Since all the countries in the world have ties, friendship, and dealings with each other, as it were, what do you think is the best way for Iran to find more friends and allies? Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] About the legal position of a person who has been convicted or arrested, the decision is usually made by the judiciary, which is completely independent. Our endeavor is that it should be fair and in accordance with regulations, and it will be so.

About finding more friends in the world, since I began my executive duties I have stated that our policy is not based on making enemies and that we try to resolve our solvable differences with other countries and have more friendly ties and more cooperation. Of course, there are cases where principles are involved, where friendship and enmity reach a point where matters should be resolved in accordance with principles. We do not compromise our principles. There are unwanted aspects of relations that sometimes undermine them, which we should try to minimize.

[Ulf Kutte, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE, in English] Mr. President, the UN sanction committee against Yugoslavia has told our newspaper that [a] minimum [of] one Iranian jumbo airplane has landed some months ago in Zagreb and there might have been weapons on board. The UN sanction committee has sent a letter to the Iranian Government and has asked what has been in this jumbo airplane—but, until now, has not received an answer. Mr. President, how does Iran support the Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina? Have you ever sent weapons, military advisers to Muslims, to help them? Or, are you going to send these things, if possible? And the second question, if allowed, Mr. President, what about exporting the revolution to countries like Sudan, Somalia, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] in Palestine? What about the future cooperation? Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] About Bosnia, we think that one of the unjust things happening there is that the Serbs are fully armed and, with ample military facilities, are committing injustices against the defenseless, unarmed and besieged people of Bosnia. We consider it right for the arms embargo on Bosnia to be lifted and for this unequal war, which is really an injustice in our history, to somehow come to an end. About that plane, it was a propaganda hue and cry. You probably know. If they had anything by way of proof, they would have made a bigger noise. There is already so much noise about nuclear weapons and such about Iran. We do not think that anything contrary to UN resolutions has taken place there. For the future, our primary wish is for this war to end. If it goes on we will give any assistance we can. We will endeavor so that UN regulations are amended in such a way that they are not contrary to justice and interests, so that the people can defend themselves. However, it is not advantageous to the Serbs, either, for the war to continue like this.

About Sudan and Somalia and Palestine, as it was asked, and the word exporting the revolution was used, the issues were mixed. Basically, we have nothing called exporting the revolution. The phrase exporting the revolution, if it is mentioned here, means that we introduce our revolution and anyone who wishes to use our experience can do so. But interference and physically exporting the revolution has never been our policy. In Sudan, for example, it is a big lie that we have a military force there. We have not even one military person in Sudan. We are doing some development work for the Sudanese—the [Construction] Jihad and others are helping there—and trade. We have no presence in Somalia, even in a diplomatic form.

In Palestine, it is our declared policy that we would give any form of help possible to the people of Palestine, for the realization of the rights of the innocent people of Palestine.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, what conclusions have you drawn from the social riots which occurred in several cities in last May and June, considering especially the conduct of the economic reforms, and in addition to that could you confirm that you intend to run for the next presidential elections?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding the first question, just the mention of occurrence of riots in Iran is a tall Western media propaganda. Naturally, when the municipality intervenes to restore order in a situation involving a number of people who have built houses, incidents may occur, the likes of which are seen all over the world every day. This cannot be described as rioting, and it cannot be given a political slant, when it bears no relation to either political issues or economic initiatives. It was an issue of disorderly conduct involving the building of houses against the regulations. The municipality put a stop to it, and they expressed their displeasure; it was very limited and negligible. It was the West or our counterrevolutionaries who blow such issues out of all proportion.

Regarding the second issue which concerns my presidency in the next term: Since the early days of my life I have been committed to the revolution. I began this work in my youth, and it is no longer a personal issue for me. I am ready to serve, whenever and wherever society needs me; and this instance is no exception. If there is a need for me to be in this post, I will again be on the scene.

[Pur-Eskandar] Good day. I hope you are well, Mr. Hashemi. The 25th Bahman [14 February] is the anniversary of the historic decree [hokm] issued by his eminence the imam [Khomeyni] with regard to Salman Rushdie. Recently, there have been renewed moves in connection with Salman Rushdie. Pressure has been brought to bear on the Islamic Republic. Will these pressures have any effect on the Islamic Republic's stance regarding Salman Rushdie or not? My second question is about economic adjustment [ta'dil]. As my colleagues, especially the domestic correspondents, have already suggested, there is some concern about possible resulting pressure on vulnerable people. Would you be so kind as to say precisely what practical programs you have foreseen in this regard concerning economic adjustment. I would be grateful if you could mention the main points. Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As to your first question, his eminence the Imam issued a fatwa. He is an eminent jurisconsult [mojtahed] in the history of Islam and especially in Iran. His view is a view which has also been accepted by many Islamic countries as a jurisprudential [feqhi] view. And no one can change the view of a jurisconsult. He expressed his view and he is, unfortunately, no longer with us. Now, if some people want to exert pressure to bring about the annulment of the view, that is a demagogic move. You cannot exert pressure on an expert in any field to make him change his view. Changing one's view is a totally technical matter; only the expert himself may change his view. It is the West that has turned the matter into a political issue in this way. Is it rare for experts to express opinions that have repercussions in other countries? If you want to stir things up, any issue can be given a political angle. The view expressed was an entirely Islamic view, which was given by a person possessing all the necessary qualifications.

[Unidentified correspondent, in English] Mr. President, it is widely perceived in the West that this is a critical juncture in relations between Islam and the West. What would you say to those who allege that Islam will replace communism as the West's new ideological rival?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] This statement is to a certain extent correct. Islamic ideology is based on independence and freedom, which the West does not wish to see in Muslim countries, that is in terms of politics. In ethical and ideological terms, too, Islamic ideology is in some cases incompatible with contemporary Western culture, and well, this incompatibility is a clear reality. We can all see it.

Westerners see themselves faced with a serious movement, and they do not want that movement to achieve victory, hence the incompatibility. I believe the West has to accept that even in keeping with its own standards, which emphasize democracy and human rights, it should respect for the public choice and opinion of the Muslim world. And it must be aware that this clash, if continued, will end to the advantage of the Muslim masses. It is not possible to suppress nations forever. It is possible to arrange events in such a way as to cause a delay in their occurrence. But such delays will have their own special victims.

The best option is for the West to let the Islamic countries be, so that they may choose their own path based on their own beliefs. Unfortunately, we do not see such endurance and tolerance for opposition in the West.

[Yusef Azema, REUTER, in English] You had a visit last week from the OPEC president, who is trying to do something about the oil market, which continues to fall. He has proposed, we understand, a 1 million barrels a day reduction in oil output from March. Is this enough in Iran's view to improve the market, especially since you have budgeted at $17 a barrel for Iranian oil in the coming year, which is very important for your revenue in Iran?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We think OPEC's proposed $21 per barrel price should be pursued; and we think this is possible. We think if the OPEC members were to reduce their output, they would realize the objective set by OPEC. We have made some efforts. Fortunately Venezuela, which is currently in charge of the OPEC conference, is pursuing the matter. We hope this will be realized.

[WASHINGTON POST correspondent, in English] Mr. President, I am sorry to go back to this again, but I like to clarify something. You said that Iran is not willing to open relations or talks with U.S. officials until the U.S. Government changes its imperialist policies. U.S. officials have said openly several times that they would like to sit down and talk to Iran in open negotiations and they have no preconditions. You appear to be putting a precondition on opening up discussions. Why not sit down and just talk about the differences?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] One has to see some goodwill on the other side to be able to enter negotiations with some hope. In response to this question, we have always said America should explain the reason for blocking our wealth. For 15 years now, significant amounts of Iranian money has been blocked in U.S. banks. Well, if there is goodwill, in such situations you have to prepare the ground. They have given no indication of any goodwill. In this situation, negotiations could be misused. With the propaganda facilities they have, they could use such negotiations for other political purposes. We have always said that they should show some goodwill first, show some good intention—in deeds not words—before we can decide.

[Al-Bahrami, in Arabic] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. AL-ALAM magazine, published in London. Allow me, Your Excellency Mr. President, to ask my question in Arabic. As it is known, the invasion by colonial culture has been, and still is, the most serious invasion against our Islamic countries throughout the past century; the forms of this invasion have been as different as the means it has used. During the last few years, our Islamic world has faced a new cultural challenge in the shape of satellite television broadcasts. What has Iran done to face up to this imminent danger, and what will it do in the future? Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We also think that the world of Islam must prepare itself to confront these kinds of onslaughts, the results of which are apparent. If the internal preparedness exists in Islamic countries, if people are provided with the inner resources to confront such issues, that will do away with many of the anxieties. Of course, these problems relate partly to governments;

but in large measure they relate also to public opinion and to the people themselves.

[Unidentifed correspondent from SALAM] With your permission, I would like to ask two questions. As you are aware, a decadent culture overtook the country before the revolution, thanks to the policies pursued by statesmen. After the victory of the Islamic revolution we succeeded in repulsing the onslaught of foreign culture. In addition we managed to export our own culture. Now, 14 years after the revolution, some enemies of the system are raising the issue of a cultural onslaught. I would like to ask first whether the aggressive culture has gained more strength or whether our culture has become more vulnerable? Second, I would like to ask a question about the discussion raised by [Central Bank Governor Mohammad Hoseyn] Adeli at a university in Tehran. He implicitly endorsed the world capitalist system. He said that economic laws have no links with ideological principles. Since such remarks are to some extent contrary to Your Excellency's views published in the book "Our Stances," I would like to ask your opinion on this matter. Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Contact between various cultures is an historical fact. One should not imagine that different cultures remain stagnant within their own boundaries. Every culture wishes to strengthen itself and expand its realms. This is true in the case of Islamic culture and Western culture. The cultural challenge has existed in the past and will continue in the future. We should not be concerned about contacts between different thoughts and cultures. People should be free to approach other thoughts and cultures with an open mind and with free thinking. We see that Islamic culture has the ability to advance when it comes into contact with other cultures under equal circumstances.

If you see some concern expressed, it is because the propaganda apparatus of Western culture is currently stronger than that of Islamic culture. This is an unfair clash [mobarezeh]. We are not at all concerned about the principle of the clash, we are rather in favor of a clash of thoughts. Our life-style demonstrates this. What is at issue is the method of approach, which in itself is a different culture.

About your second question on the links between the economic and cultural and political issues, in my opinion these issues are linked and cannot be separated. They affect one another. In my opinion, the remarks of the central bank governor have either been distorted or badly interpreted. He does not have any views different from what I said.

[Niki, JAPAN PRESS, in English] Mr. President, the G-7 countries, including Japan and Germany, are ready to stop high technology exports to Iran, and the Japanese Government has already started new trade restrictions against Iran. Could you give us your comment about this development? Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Naturally we are against restrictions imposed on us by others. However, we are not concerned. They have announced that they are concerned about the possibility of Iran manufacturing nuclear or chemical and other such weapons. We do not want such weapons anyway and are not striving to acquire them; so any restrictions aimed at preventing the acquisition of such weapons poses no problem to us. However, the claim they are making is false. On the other hand, we know they cannot do much. Such restrictions have been imposed upon us almost since the start of the revolution. But we have always managed to overcome our difficulties. It is not as if we cannot gain access to what we need, thanks to the circumstances. We are not searching to obtain undesirable things. Therefore, it does not matter whether they restrict the sale of such things or not.

[Christopher Walker, London TIMES, in English] If I could ask two questions. Firstly, the banned British author, Salman Rushdie, has come out of hiding recently and made a number of controversial appearances in such countries as Germany, Denmark, and the United States. Will this have an effect on Iran's future relations with Britain and, possibly, with the West? And could you please tell us about the 15th of Khordad committee [organization which offered a reward to whoever kills Rushdie] that is apparently going to hold a seminar on the whole Rushdie affair in the coming days, possibly in the next two weeks, and tell us the purpose of that seminar, please. Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As to whether it will have an effect or not, that is up to those governments themselves. I believe that this issue is usually used as an excuse by people who want to achieve certain aims. As I said earlier, the assertion of a view by a jurisconsult [faqih] should not entail this kind of hue and cry. As to the seminar that was referred to, that has to do with a nongovernmental organization. It has nothing to do with [marbut nist] the government or the regime [nezam] as a whole. They can have a seminar or not, as they please. It is the same in the West, where people can do things of their own choosing.

[Hoseyn Sana'i, IRAN EXPORTS] Greetings. I represent IRAN EXPORTS magazine. You remarked on the 10-percent growth in production. Regarding the export of nonoil products, in the first five-year plan we envisaged the export of 18 billion [currency not specified], 9 billion of which we have realized. We have excellent potential markets in our neighboring countries. My question to your excellency is whether or not more serious thought has been given to the export of Iranian nonoil products in the second five-year development plan?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Regarding exports: As you know, we were not ready at the beginning of the [five-year] plan; there were no commodities to be exported, since very little had been produced. It took a year for production to gather pace in Iran, and in fact our export potential only began to pick up two years ago. Since then it has maintained an optimal growth rate. Our policy is to boost exports. The boost given to production increases export potential and enables us to compete in international markets. God willing, we will continue this policy.

[Doucet, in English] Hello, I'm Lys Doucet of the BBC. Sir, you have given the impression in this news conference that everybody else—the Americans and the Israelis—must change but that Iran will remain the same. Is this because you feel that Iran's previous efforts, for example in helping to free the Western hostages in Lebanon, have not been reciprocated by the West and that Iran is not going to do anything else? Or is it possible that after 14 years of the Islamic Revolution nothing can change, that you have not learnt any lessons from the revolution?

Second, if I could ask you a second question. There has been a very strong reaction internally: some critics of the, let us say, cultural policy—even people within your own ranks who have criticized—have been suppressed. Do you believe that this the way to make a stronger Iran; that Iran can continue to grow if there is this kind of reaction; that people's books aren't being published; that things are being burned down by some group or another? Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] With reference to our remark about others having to change, there are certain issues which do not concern us, and we are not saying that those should change. They are free and have authority over their own choices and this does not concern us. But there are issues that do concern us. For instance, the Palestine question is an Islamic one and we have a say in it. We are involved; it is our right to demand that this policy be changed. An injustice has been committed and has to be corrected.

As to America, well, America has done us an injustice, both before the revolution and after it. It is with reference to us that we are saying it should change its policy. That is what concerns us. If we have also done them an injustice or wrong, then we too have to change. If you mention an instance of the Islamic Republic doing wrong toward others and then say that Iran should remain as it is. We make no such claim for ourselves. We try not to do anything wrong toward others. It is therefore in this context that we say it is for them to change—not in the general context.

In so far as cultural questions are concerned, we believe that in Iran there is real and complete freedom, provided that cultural works are not mixed with disruption and the country's law and order is not disturbed. You can see our Majles platform and you see our newspapers; issues of importance to the country—in foreign, domestic, and cultural relations—are being raised and discussed freely in the media. You in the West would not tolerate anything which smacks of conspiracy, but would give it another form and name. Here, we confront this kind of case under the name of Islam.

It is unfair that in a country such as Iran should be accused of bullying, because there are so many individual and social freedoms here; different points of views are expressed in the very free platforms of our country; and all official religious factions are present in the Majles. For example, the deputy for religious minorities expresses his opinion there just like the first deputy for Tehran. It is possible that some things are not in line with your values, and of course, this boils down to cultural differences in which there are tensions and oppositions.

[Doucet, in English] May I just ask you to clarify something. You have said—with your permission—you have said that Iran is trying to be good towards other countries, if the translation is correct. What has Iran done in the last 14 years, specifically, let us say during your tenure? What do you believe you have done, or that Iran has done, to improve relations with the West, such that the West, the United States, Britain, or other countries should now reciprocate, should now try to do things for Iran. Can you be specific, because I think it is a critical juncture. Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The question should be pushed a little. Why have these strains appeared? Who was the element behind these strains? They want to confront a free and revolutionary nation with the same colonialist ideas, and this leads to certain occurrences. You should mention instances where Iran has done them wrong, has acted against their values. We think we have been consistent with international norms, insofar as they fit the limits of our revolution. We have never created trouble [mozahem budan] for others; others have created trouble for us.

[Moderator] Mr. Hosayn Mohammadi of KAR newspaper.

[Mohammadi] I hope you are well, Mr. President. With regard to the fact that next year's debts are short-term ones, could you please tell us, in case there is a shortage of foreign currency, how will the price balance be maintained? The second question: The bill for the direct election of mayors and formation of Islamic councils was recently approved. But because the issue of the council law has been a topic of debate sice 1361 [year starting March 1982], how do you see the ground for its implementation?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] On foreign currency debts, we have planned our program so as to pay our total commitments and reduce 15 percent of our foreign commitments. This was basically the case with the first development program. For the first three years we were allowed to borrow and increase foreign commitments. The last two years are gradually beginning and the foreign commitments will decrease until we reach a balance. This year, 1371, we have reduced our commitments by 4 billion dollars, and we think we will reduce the same amount in 1372. This process will continue until the borrowing, which started with the first program, will reach zero.

On your second question. What was the second question? On the city councils. There were difficulties with the law. The law had been passed in the third Majles. It had practical problems. The government reformed the problems and sent it to the Majles. Once it is passed the mayors will be elected by the people.

[Unidentifed correspondent, in English] Mr. President, can you tell us a little bit about the economic policies behind the new economic organization called the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], and are there any time frames for an agreement?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] With the joining of other countries of the region—countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus—the ECO has acquired a new framework, and it has gathered new potential. There will not be any fundamental changes in principle, as they have also accepted ECO's previous conditions. We have entered a new stage in which joint banks and insurance, and reductions in tariffs and preferential tariffs, must be set up and put into operation between member countries—and means of communication must be restored. I believe it will be some time before these come into effect.

[Dorrani] I am Mr. Dorrani from France broadcasting. Even though I think there have been enough cultural and economic questions, my question concerns social and cultural activities for young people—who constitute a great section of our population—in particular the field of sports. The government's current plan is to increase sports centers and to encourage young people to pay greater attention to physical education, and it seems that in that respect greater attention has been given to young men. My question is whether your government has any plans to increase women's participation in the social and sports sectors in order to bridge the existing gap, and if there are any future plans to be announced?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As the gentlemen has pointed out, in our society women still do not enjoy the same share in terms of sports and physical education. The government's policy is to increase women's participation in this sector. That was one of the policies adopted by the Supreme Council of Youth, which was recently convened. We have specific plans for the Ten Days of Dawn period, including an international gathering from Islamic countries in women's sports, of which the media will be informed. We are encouraging it. Of course this is not an easy task; there are restrictions in view of our society's cultural and historical record and the need to observe ethics. The women's presence and share must be expanded gradually and within the frameworks of the cultural and ethical regulations of our country.

[Parviz, in English] Mr. Irfan Parviz of TEHRAN TIMES. During my recent interviews and talks with a number of diplomats and business executives, I found that they had some confusion in their minds because of conflicting statements by some high officials on vital issues such as unification of rates of hard currency and extent of the percentage of foreign investment. Mr. President, could you please explicitly throw light on these vital issues so that this misunderstanding and confusion from the minds of perspective investors and other business executives may be removed?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I think if they look at government programs, Majles deliberations, and legal decrees, they will see that all these things—questions which were raised—are clear. But if different points of views are expressed, well then, that is how it is in a free society. We cannot tell the people that everybody should express views according to the way we think. There is freedom of expression. However, our program in economic, industrial, foreign relations, foreign trade, foreign investments, and all those things are clear. We have positive views on them and have said so. Statements that are made should not be the basis for drawing conclusions. Decrees and regulations must be studied; if you find ambiguities in them, then raise your point accordingly.

[Rastgu] Mr. Rastgu of JAHAN-E ESLAM. As prices are rising, and with regard to the gap between the income of deprived groups—the salaried class and the workers—and price increases, is the government going to reduce the number of subsidized items next year? Also, in addition to payment of subsidies, what other levers are the government going to use to protect the deprived groups? My second question: Recently the United Arab Emirates has raised territorial claims on the Iranian islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs. I would like to ask Your Excellency where negotiation with the UAE officials has led.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As to the subsidies, I have said once again that in our program we usually increase the pay scale of the salaried classes by a little more than the inflation rate. For instance, if our inflation is 20 percent, then salaries are increased by more than 25 percent or 30 percent. That way we will make up for the decrease the war years—gradually.

As to those who do not receive government salaries or fixed incomes, several ways exist to serve them. First, we have made a considerable allocation in our budget, which will provide direct help to them. This year we have increased that figure. Second, essential goods such as bread, sugar, edible oil, and the like, which are essential, are still being given to them through coupons and rationing. As a whole, the adjustment policy is to adjust them by around 20 percent every year and in return incomes will go up. If this is studied in a fair manner you will see that adjustment between incomes and the cost of living, especially in the case of salaried groups, has always been in favor of the salaried groups. That is what is in the program.

Moreover, we have other plans such as development of medical insurance. The draft bill for this was sent to the Majles recently. That will bring all of society under medical treatment cover. There is also social insurance, which we are now debating in the cabinet. All of society, especially the deprived class, will come under social insurance. Naturally, that way they will not be vulnerable—the minimum of necessities will be given to them.

As to the UAE and the islands, I have already explained that our policy is to solve the problem through bilateral talks.

[Moderator] Mr. Peter [name indistinct] George, (?South) News, Canada.

[George, in English] Mr. President, why did Iran feel it was necessary, particularly at this time, to purchase submarines? And tell us something of the activities of the one submarine that your country has already taken possession of.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The purchase of submarines goes back to before the revolution. It has nothing to do with this period. Before the revolution the previous regime purchased a number of submarines from Germany and America, and they had started to build bases for them.

With the revolution Germany and America stopped the contracts and our claim is still outstanding. After the revolution we proceeded along the same line, except through Russia. When I went to Moscow during Mr. Gorbachev's time, we signed the agreements for the purchase of the submarines, the investments in which we had already made. Now we have reached the conclusion—they have started building them. The first was finished and delivered and the rest will gradually be built.

This will not disturb the balance of power in the region. Those who have military knowledge know that a few submarines cannot change many things. However, submarines are a part of present-day naval defenses. If you take that link out of the chain the defensive chain would become weak. If we do not buy submarines we would be asked, how are you going to maintain your defensive chain without having submarines?

[McGuar, in English] Mr. Niel McGuar of AP. Good morning Mr. President. Sorry to take up so much of your time. In traveling around Tehran, we often meet Iranians who have two or three jobs to pay the rent and food. They tell us that you have introduced reasonable plans, or at least talk of reasonable plans, to free up the economy somewhat. But it appears that every time you try to take a step forward, your step is blocked by people in the government, who think decentralization would be betraying the revolution. Could you comment on that please? And one other slightly repetitive question, can you tell us anything more specific about the charges against Mr. [Milton] Mayer? I know you said it is up to the court, but could you tell us anything and give us any details about what are the charges against him? Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The fact that some Iranians have three jobs is nothing new. Never in history has an ordinary civil servant in Iran been able to meet all his living expenses with his civil service salary alone. Those who do not have any other sources of revenue usually meet their expenses by finding a second job. The government's policy is to create a balance between salaries and expenses for a normal living standard. But this policy will be introduced gradually.

About the accused American, truly this is not a political incident in Iran. This is a judicial and security matter. Individuals are arrested on various charges. They are tried in accordance with the law. They are then freed if the charges against them are dropped, and are punished if they are convicted. The law is the same for Iranians and non-Iranians alike. We are striving hard to separate political issues from judicial matters. Therefore, from the start we do not interfere with works of the judicial branch and do not go to them to ask what the matter is. The judicial branch performs its task. The issue will be resolved if you do not make it a political one.

On the government's economic plans and decentralization, our people have welcomed the policy. During the war we were running many sectors [words indistinct], including economic policies, trade, distribution of goods, manufacturing, and many other affairs. We are gradually removing these tasks from the state sector to be allocated to a more appropriate sector. In another step toward decentralization, we are giving more power to provincial authorities. The provinces can make many decisions without having to contact Tehran. I think our people have accepted this policy and no one considers it to be contrary to the revolution. Of course, some remnants of the Marxist ideology have existed in our country from previous eras. There are still some who think the government should be in charge of all sectors. This thought is neither in the essence of our revolution nor in the public opinion of our society.

[Moderator] Mr. Hamid Yeksan, from KEYHAN.

[Yeksan] Peace be upon you. I have two questions. There is a prevailing climate in the region regarding the fear of all the countries of the region from the alleged threat from a powerful Iran in case Saddam Husayn's regime goes or is removed. This climate of fear is created by the Iraqi regime itself, which has always tried to spread this fear in the region and to warn the Western countries of such a threat. Unfortunately, some of the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf have been frightened as the result of such illusions, so much so that they are trying to conclude military pacts with the West, especially with the United States, and to purchase a vast quantity of weapons. First, will these military pacts between the Gulf states and the West resolve the security situation in the region? Second, what is Tehran's strategy regarding relations with Baghdad in case the Ba'thist government continues, in view of the climate that they have created and also in view of the arrival of the Democrats in the White House?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I agree with the point that you made as an introduction to your question, that there are certain mischievous efforts made by world propaganda to portray Iran as a source of danger to the region. One aim of this propaganda is to divert the attention of the Arab countries from the issue of Israel toward Iran. This is something that is going on. So far we have demonstrated, and we also demonstrated it during the [Iran-Iraq] war, that we are very serious in defending ourselves. We will never give in when it concerns our own interests. However, we have no intention whatsoever of acting aggressively toward our neighbors and interfering in the affairs of our neighbors. No country, whether large or small, should have any anxiety regarding any harm coming to it from Iran.

As for military cooperation and military pacts between small Persian Gulf countries and America and other countries, we are against them. Basically, we believe it is not right to provide a foothold for the West here from a military point of view. Of course, they can have cooperation. Every country is free to have cooperation. However, we do not regard military pacts as the means for the establishment of real peace and stability in the region. We do not regard them to be in the interest of those governments either.

Concerning Iraq, after the war we tried gradually to sort out our problems with Iraq and not to sully our neighborliness with conflicts. Of course, it was made clear that the desire for conciliation that was shown by Iraq was due to its aggression against Kuwait. If we imagine that the Ba'thist Party and Saddam remain in power, and if he is the legal head of that country and if he wishes to cooperate with Iran, we will also cooperate with them like with any other neighbor. However, they have not yet given us our rights, they have still not released some of our prisoners of war, they have not paid war reparations, although it was made clear that they were the guilty party, and other similar things. These things should be sorted out between us and them. However, if a popular government comes into power in Iraq, naturally we will be more comfortable in cooperating with it.

[Moderator] Mr. Perham of Italy national broadcasting.

[Perham] Hello Mr. President. I have two questions to clarify some ambiguities. One is about foreign investment in Iran. The Constitution does not allow foreigners to hold majority shares, but free zones allow this. This ambiguity of the Constitution regarding free zones is a problem for foreign investors. Do you not think that it should be clarified in the law? The second point about clarifying ambiguities concerns Iraqi planes and the rumors about them. As an official, what do you say about the situation regarding those planes? Will they be confiscated as war reparations? What will become of them? Thank you very much.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] About the first question regarding foreign investment, we have an article in the Constitution that bans giving concessions [emtiyaz]. There is a discussion going on now about whether by concessions it means monopoly, or whether it concerns investments of more than 51 percent, whereby a company is in foreign control. The Guardian Council is the one to express views on it. If the Guardian Council decides that foreigners cannot hold more than 51 percent of the shares in a company, then, naturally, foreign investment would be below 50 percent. If not, they could invest more.

About the Iraqi planes, they have exaggerated. What we have accepted as the number of planes that have come to Iran are still in Iran. [sentence as heard] A number belonged to Kuwait and the Kuwaitis came and took them. Of course, they have not paid us for the maintenance costs yet; we are still owed that. The United Nations, Kuwait, and Iraq reached an agreement and we handed them back. The rest of the planes are still here until things are finally resolved by the United Nations and in terms of our relations with Iraq.

[Moderator] Mr. [Name indistinct] from Al-SIYASSAH, from Kuwait.

[Correspondent, in Arabic] Your Excellency, I would like to ask you a question in Arabic, which I know you speak. I hope you will answer me in Arabic so the Arab world will hear you without translation. Your Excellency, the Arab world and the Gulf feel apprehensive regarding Iran, and they fear her seeking power and hegemony, as well as the issue that is called exporting the revolution, and have some evidence regarding the islands, regarding arming of Iran, regarding Iran's stance toward the Arab-Israeli settlement, and similar issues. Have you got a message that you would like to address to the Arab world in general and the Gulf in particular through this news conference? Thank you, Your Excellency.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We have repeatedly answered this question. His request is that I answer in Arabic so all Arabs can understand it. Well, these remarks will be translated into Arabic. Now our official language here in this interview is Persian. It is a repetitive question. As to the anxiety of some countries concerning Iran, we do not know in which language we should express that we do not have any unfriendly attitude toward any of our neighbors. We proved this during the Iran-Iraq war. Many Arab countries in the south acted badly toward us during the war. They gave money to Iraq, they provided her with assistance, but we overlooked all these issues. We have extended a hand of friendship toward them. They wrongly allow themselves to be influenced by the hue and cry of propaganda aimed at distracting their attention from Israel. We can work together through greater cooperation. As for the three islands, you know that all issues regarding them were solved and were completed in 1371. There were a large number of issues, but they have all been completed. We increased some control from a security point of view over Abu Musa due to certain conditions in the Persian Gulf. That is why they have raised such a hue and cry. These are all excuses. Let them not look for points to quibble about. Let us sit together and talk together. The issues between the two countries can be sorted out side by side. We should pursue our common problems in a friendly manner.

[Moderator] Mr. Zarinfard, of KHABAR-E JONUB newspaper.

[Zarinfard] Greetings. I am here on behalf of the KHABAR-E JONUB newspaper. There are good specialists in the country. For example, this was demonstrated recently in the field of medicine by Dr. Sanjarian and his team with their heart transplant. What kind of support is there for these vital specializations? Also, there have been regulations for the formation of a charity for heart transplants, whose head is said to be yourself, and the establishment of a heart transplant unit in Shiraz. Are you going to receive the members of the team? Could you please elaborate on these issues.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Our policy on education and research is to cover the weaknesses left from the previous era. We encourage research and innovation as well as researchers. In the second development plan we have more room for maneuver, and we have allocated more to this. This year, in the budget, we have given a greater share than planned. I have great interest in these sorts of centers and people. The well-being of our country is significantly determined in this way. I hope they are assured a better future.

[Zarinfard] I have another question about the latest plan for setting up a third television channel as well as the setting up of cable television transmitters in Iran—could you please elaborate?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We accept that television programming should be more varied. Sometimes the programs of the two existing channels are not favored by some people. There should be more variety—sports, entertainment, cultural, leisure, and news programs—and this requires more channels. We also endorsed recently in a supreme cultural revolution session that these kinds of visual activities are part of the expansion program of the Voice and Vision [radio and TV system] and the Ministry of Islamic Guidance.

[Moderator] Mr. Steen of NRC, Netherlands.

[Steen, in English] Mr. President, the Islamic revolution was made 14 years ago in the name of God, and to improve the fate of the mostaz'afin [the deprived]. Can you now say after those 14 years that you, as one of the fighters in the Islamic revolution, that you have succeeded? Can you call the situation in the Islamic worlds as satisfying? That is my first question. Second question: During those 14 years, the guides of the revolution always called the government of the Islamic revolution a divine government because the revolution was a divine revolution. Now, if the government is a divine government, does that mean that from a theological and from a philosophical and therefore also from the political point of view that no government of the Islamic Republic of Iran ever can admit mistakes?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] As to how successful we have been in achieving our objectives in these past 14 years, we think we have been very successful in spite of war and embargo. If you have the opportunity to travel to different parts of Iran, you will be able to see the changes in people's lives. Before the revolution, building and development were limited to two or three major cities in Iran. Today, if you go to the country's villages you will see that the majority have now got water, electricity, and they are being provided with the same facilities that exist in Tehran. Resources are being divided fairly in the country. There are a lot of rural roads, rural schools, and a move to combat illiteracy; developing deprived regions; controlling water and turning the natural resources of underdeveloped centers into cash. It is not without reason that you see people so fond of their revolution. God willing, you are here during the Ten Days of Dawn and you will see how much people love their revolution. If we had not been successful, they would have not have had this epic. In the trips that I take to the provinces, I see that everyone has gathered around to express their love and fondness for the revolution with all their being.

The political independence that our country has achieved has been a long-standing desire on the part of our nation. You should accept that Iran is standing on its own feet today and makes her own decisions. She is not under the influence of any power in the world. These are very great achievements for us. Some serious infrastructure works are being carried out here. We are either drawing up the plans for or are in the process of building about a 100 dams. Electricity, railroads, ports, agriculture, and mines—all these are being activated speedily and energetically. Of course, we were halted during the period of the war and we are compensating for this now.

Internationally, we think we are successful except that you will not—they will not—allow Muslims to fulfill the message they have received from us. If you were to give freedom to Islamic countries and tell people to vote for their own government, you will realize that people have received our message. But they suppress Muslims. I cite Algeria as an example. You saw how approximately 70-80 percent of the people voted for an Islamic government. If the success of the revolution does not lie in its mission, then where does it lie? Let people be free and express their opinion and you will then understand whether the revolution has been victorious or not. Of course, we never claimed that we would be strong enough to combat against powerful countries on our own. Our message is divine in the sense that we tell people what God's edicts are—anyone who wants to accept these can do so. My assessment is that the revolution has been a very successful one in spite of all the opposition it has encountered. And since its message is anti-arrogance and anti-oppression, it is natural for oppressive powers to be at loggerheads with us.

Concerning your second question about whether we think that we do not make mistakes, this is not at all what is meant. When we talk about divine government, it means we would like to implement divine edicts—implement what the Koran prescribes, for instance. This has nothing to do with making mistakes. Yes, we also make mistakes like everyone else—we do not differ in this way from anyone else.

[Moderator] Mr. Muhammad al-Mujabbar of AL-WATAN magazine.

[Al-Mujabbar, in Arabic] Peace be upon you, Mr. President. What is the current state of Qatari-Iranian relations, especially after the subsequent events of the Iraq-Iran war, the Gulf war, and finally, the dispute with UAE regarding the islands? Thank you.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] They asked about our relations with Qatar. We are satisfied with our relations with Qatar, which are good. We have reached understandings and cooperation in various fields. The unnecessary hue and cry over the islands has not affected our relations with Qatar, and we hope this will act as an example as far as relations with other countries are concerned.

[Moderator] Mr. Mark Turdlow, Independent Radio News, England.

[Turdlow, in English] Mr. President, I have two questions. The first is you talk about Western propaganda against Iran. After the United States, which Western country do you believe is the most antagonistic to Iran and Islamic peoples? Or, to put it another way, the most supportive of America's policies in the region. My second question is: How do you explain what appears to be a widespread nostalgia here in Iran for the days before the revolution?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] Concerning propaganda, we think that America is more hostile in its behavior toward us than others. But others also make incorrect statements in their propaganda media.

As to people's views of their revolution, I explained in the previous question that we see the people to be loyal, present in the arena, and united with the Revolution. I hope you will also see an example of this in Tehran at the 22d Bahman [11 February] ceremonies, and you will also see the scenes in the provinces. Of course, from the outset there was a a number of people who did not agree with the revolution. Some of these gradually integrated, but there are still a small number of people who are not in favor. These issues will become clear to you both during the elections and the revolutionary ceremonies we have.

[Moderator] Mrs. Mostashar of the FINANCIAL TIMES.

[Mostashar, in English] Mr. President, you've often encouraged women to take a greater part in Iranian society. What I'd like to ask is how could a women ever aspire to—let's say—become your foreign minister if every time she needs to travel she has to have her husband's permission? There remain many, many things that women are unhappy about in this society and that's not meaning hejab [veil]; it is being half a man when giving evidence [in court] and these sorts of things. Islam says that you must progress with your time and your place. Is this the time and place to give women their human rights? [In the translation of the question into Persian, the translator omits the reference to women becoming foreign minister and needing permission for travel and does not translate "human rights"]

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] We really insist on the policy of appropriating the social personality of our women. We accept that due to conditions before the revolution, a culture penetrated our society that isolated women. Some women were, of course, in the arena, but the majority of our women were islolated because they were not happy with the prevailing situation. We are gradually bringing the latter onto the scene. If you look at our universities, about half of those who pass the entrance examinations are women. Well, this is the best way that women could enter society in the long term. In education and welfare, approximately 30-35 percent of the teachers are women, and they are very active. We try to open ways for women to come and accept responsibilities in all arenas, in addition to their presence in the arena of struggle. We really do encourage them. But we still have some way to go before we reach our ideal. The point about counting women as half a man, there is no such thought in our society. We define women in society as complete human beings possessing personalities that are equal to those of men. Naturally, because of the physical and spiritual [ruhi] disposition of women—you cannot deny the physical difference—there are instances when we take into consideration certain conditions regarding women or men, and these are mostly to the benefit rather than detriment of women. What we would like to do is to eliminate every injustice and discrimination. It would take some time, of course, before this could be realized in all fields.

[Moderator] Dr. Olad Kotte of Germany.

[Kotte, in English] Mr. President, there is a lot of propaganda for the journalists are faced with all over the world, and this is the chance to clarify one point. [sentence as heard] My question would be: In the United States, murderers are executed even if they are handicapped; in Saudi Arabia they always execute political prisoners, murderers, drug dealers; and also in Iran people are executed—hundreds of them every year. And if you said that—just basically—the United States have to go one step forward in their relations with Iran, could not Iran also go one step to the Western culture, a bit, just a bit, stop torturing prisoners, because the humanitarian organizations always face us with stories people how they are treated in prisons here and I think there is no doubt some of them are treated very, very bad. And this you don't find—hopefully you don't find—in Western European culture and American culture. So could there be a chance to stop that torturing people in prison? Thank you, Mr. President.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] I ask you and other journalists to visit our prisons. The treatment of prisoners in Iranian prisons is such that you Westerners—with all your claims—cannot implement it. Most of our prisoners have leaves. In certain periods they come home to spend time with their wives and children. They have special family meetings. Great amounts of facilities are provided for them in prison. The matter of torture and these issues are concerned with the period previous to the revolution, when you Westerners supported that regime. We were ourselves in the prisons of the former regime. I myself was once tortured all night—until the morning—a savage torture—at the very time that your governments had the best of relations with Iran. You know this and I know this. In Iran there is a fight against smuggling, which is very costly for us and you receive part of the benefit. In other words, the goods are smuggled from Iran. We stand against them and fight selflessly with this heavenly calamity. Unfortunately, your media mix the execution of smugglers with the execution of political prisoners. You go and find one case. I think this is propaganda blackmail. If you find one case that we have executed one political prisoner for smuggling, then say so. Otherwise these arguments justify what I said, that you are blackmailing us with your propaganda against Iran. Presently in Iran, beside those who have been causing mischief through terrorism and security sabotage, no one is under arrest for any political offense. There are no longer political offenses for us to pursue. We do not intend to have political offenses of the kind that you spread propaganda about. People are free. You should read our press for a week. Listen to the Majles. See how much government policies and current programs are criticized. Freedom is at the highest level. True, if someone wants to spy, to disturb security, to smuggle drugs, or to help insurgents, no country will tolerate these offenses.

With regard to human rights, I think you really owe us something. You say we should take a step toward the West. If you are a bit more fair, you would take back your word. Did not these very Westerners support the Iraqi Government—which was killing groups of people—in a war against us? Or what about other countries that are around us? In the south for example. In comparison to us, how do they treat human rights, elections, or the treatment of political opposition? How do you behave toward them? You have very friendly relations. Because it is in your own interest. You are ready to sign military agreements with them and deliver advanced aircraft to them in the hundreds. In these cases are the governments committed to human rights? With regard to your question, if a fair court is established, Iran will undoubtedly win. We have many unanswered questions about your relations with these sorts of issues. Some of our people have been the victim of Western prisons for some reason or another. From them we have heard examples of how prisoners are treated. Of course I do not want to name them, but I can if you want. Some of your Western people have been imprisoned in Iran. Ask them how they were treated. We studied their cases and passed fair judgment. To bring more cases would only take your time. I claim that in the case of prisoners and human rights, others owe us something—we do not owe others something.

Well, has the news conference ended? I thank all the honorable journalists who have presented their concerns with precision, and I tried to answer in an open climate and without prejudgement. I do not know whether you have been persuaded or not, but I expect that in quoting the issues you will be honest. And God willing you will better understand the realities of our country through your stay in Iran. May God's blessing be upon you.

U.S. Decision To Act 'Alone' on Iraq Questioned

NC0302084493 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 19 Jan 93 p 15

[Editorial: "Saddam's Fresh Display of Power Against the Regional Shaykhs"]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

If people had applauded Iraq's war crimes, congratulated one another, and exchanged smiles in tacit agreement at Saddam's egotistical behavior earlier, it is no longer being done. A new round of Baghdad's mischief-mongering has begun with an attack inside Kuwaiti territory and flights over the no-fly zone in northern and southern Iraq. With his missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Saddam is trying to prove that he still has the power to confront all the Arabs in the region. [passage omitted]

Is there anyone in Riyadh and Kuwait ready to pay ransom to the Baghdad executioner? For those unable to fight Saddam, entering into a "military phase" would perhaps be the most dangerous decision. This is especially true because the presence of the U.S. military forces is not any source of assurance despite extensive propaganda of the opposite.

The al-Sabahs and the Al Sa'uds are apprehensive that Washington may capitalize on this golden opportunity and, by contacts with the lower echelons of the two countries, envision replacing them with new pawns in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia where the Al Sa'uds and al-Sabahs do not have a very strong foothold. Perhaps this is why the latest Washington policies in the region have not received a warm welcome from the Al Sa'uds and the al-Sabahs. Their recent responses have been very tepid compared to earlier reaction to U.S. decisions.

In the first round of the war against Iraq, a large coalition of U.S., European, and Arab forces was present and entered the fray with UN endorsement. However, in the latest ambush against Iraq a few nights ago, the Arabs seem to have conspicuously withdrawn from the coalition and the United Nations rejected any form of coordination or cooperation. Thus, the United States is acting alone; even Britain and France did not participate. What does this political about-face signify?

Has Washington become isolated because of its abuse of power? Has Europe decided not to follow Washington's decisions? Are the U.S. allies now feeling that Washington's objectives have extended beyond a warning to Saddam and a reprimand to Baghdad for his latest act of audacity? Or is it that Washington's allies are not inclined to go ahead any further in this conflict against the Baghdad executioner?

Despite the above, it appears that Washington is not unhappy to act alone. There was a time when the United States felt that it required 'accomplices' to act against an Arab country and, therefore, enlisted them from Europe and from the Arab front. Today, however, it feels it can to enter the field of action without any accomplices and without encountering any serious or effective protests.

From this point of view, the latest U.S. missile attacks take on new significance and indicate that the U.S. strategists are trying to consolidate this phenomenon for future use; that is, they are trying to have the idea that the United States can act against an Arab country by itself, without any effective or serious opposition, accepted by the U.S. population.

Facts and figures indicate that Washington very much wants to drive home such underhand impressions; meanwhile, Baghdad does not seem to be sitting idle either. Missile attacks on Kuwait and Saudi Arabia were an audacious act that could culminate in fresh attacks on Israel. This would once again make Saddam a force to reckon with in Arab public opinion. [passage omitted]

Saddam has tried to assure Iraqi militarists that despite all the programs to disarm Iraq and destroy the extensive capability of its Armed Forces, he is still able to attack long-range targets. If this is Baghdad's aim, such efforts may well culminate in attacks against Israel. In this way, Saddam will be able to neutralize all the propaganda of the Bush era. This will enable him to capitalize on the volatile conditions in the region.

Are there, however, any other events taking shape that may affect the present and future decisions of various parties involved in the incidents of today? The correct answer to this question will only transpire with the passage of time.

Speaker, Russian Envoy Hope for Expanded Relations

LD0202175693 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in English 1400 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The Russian ambassador to Tehran, Mr. Vladimir Gudev, today met with Majlis Speaker Nateq-Nuri. At the meeting, Mr. Gudev expressed satisfaction over the promotion of the two countries' ties during his mission in Tehran hoping that agreements would soon be signed between Iran and Russia. He further said that the current level of economic relations between the two countries is not sufficient. Mr. Gudev also stressed the need for the expansion of Irano-Russian parliamentary relations.

At the end of his speech, the Russian official congratulated Mr. Nateq-Nuri on the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution's victory. Iran's Majlis speaker referred to the vast area existing for the promotion of bilateral ties. In conclusion Mr. Nateq-Nuri expressed the hope that the formation of a parliamentary friendship group would soon materialize.

Discuss Central Asia

LD0202182993 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Russian ambassador to Iran [Vladimir] Gudev, at the end of his mission in Tehran, at a meeting with Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri, while expressing satisfaction about the progress made in the relations between the two countries, stressed the importance of expanding those ties. He also said that the maintenance of security and stability in the region in the important region, Central Asia, depended on good ties between Russia and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Pointing out the current situation of the newly independent Central Asian countries, Nateq-Nuri said that cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia at international forums was an effective factor in extinguishing the flames of war in those countries.

Official on Gulf, Central Asian States Relations

LD0202155393 Tehran IRNA in English 1425 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 2, IRNA—Foreign Ministry Director General for the Persian Gulf, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mostafa Haeri Fumani said here Tuesday [2 February] that the demise of communism has made the Persian Gulf southern states interested in building relations with the Central Asian republics.

Iran as a bridge between the Central Asia and the Persian Gulf southern states plays a significant role in strengthening relations between Tehran and the Persian Gulf countries, he told IRNA in an interview.

Once the Bandar Abbas-Sarakhs-Turkmenistan-railway becomes operational, the Persian Gulf littoral states will be connected to the Central Asian republics, said the hojjat ol-eslam.

He said the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys good trade ties and diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level with the regional countries.

Haeri added that among the Persian Gulf littoral states Iran's relations with Oman is at the highest level and growing because of a better understanding between Tehran and Muscat and common views on international issues.

As for Iran's relations with Kuwait, Haeri said that a bright prospect is developing between the two countries in economic field.

On Tehran-Riyadh ties, he said relations have been improving over the past two years and the Islamic Republic of Iran is to open a trade fair in Saudi Arabia which would have significant impact on bilateral economic relations.

Expansion of Ties Discussed With DPRK Minister

LD3001175093 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 30 Jan 93

[Text] Kim Hak-sop, the North Korean minister of post and telecommunications, discussed ways of expanding bilateral ties when he met today with Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri.

At the meeting, Nateq-Nuri remarked on the two countries' united front against global arrogance. He said: We will never forget North Korean assistance during the imposed [Iran-Iraq] war. Considering our very close relations during that period, we are certain to continue these ties at a much higher level during the period of peace and reconstruction.

DPRK To Buy Telecommunications Equipment

LD3101175693 Tehran IRNA in English 1614 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] Tehran, Jan. 31, IRNA—Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) signed an agreement here today for sale of Iran's telecommunications equipment to DPRK.

The agreement inked by Iran's post, telephones and telegraph minister, Mohammad Gharazi, and his DPRK counterpart, Kim Hak-sop, also calls for direct satellite telephone link between the two countries by February 1993.

Iran will also offer training facilities to North Korean experts and technicians.

Based on the agreement, Iranian experts are expected to modernize North Korea's postal system, and the two sides are to arrange speedy postal services to the other party.

Tehran and Pyongyang also agreed to cooperate with each other in the technical fields, exchange of information through satellite, and at international specialized organizations.

Sop heading a five-man delegation arrived here on Tuesday [2 February] and visited various Iranian telecommunications production lines and installations.

The DPRK delegation is to leave here for Pyongyang today.

DPRK Parliamentary Speaker Arrives for Visit

LD0202162293 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Mr. Yang Hyong-sop, speaker of the North Korean Parliament, arrived in Tehran this afternoon and was welcomed by Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri.

On his arrival, the North Korean parliamentary speaker said in an interview with our correspondent that the aim of his trip to Iran is to review ways of expanding mutual ties and to study the achievements of the Islamic revolution in Iran, which have been achieved under the leadership of His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic revolution, and the management of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

At the interview, Mr. Nateq-Nuri referred to North Korea's friendship and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran during the war and in the reconstruction era, and said: North Korea has very good and friendly ties with us, and is one of our best friends. Therefore, such comings and goings are very effective in deepening and expanding the ties between the two countries and will result in parliamentary friendship groups starting their work as industriously as possible.

Majles Deputies Approve State Budget Bill

NC3101071293 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] The 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] budget bill was approved by the Majles deputies. The bill comprises a single paragraph and 59 articles. The budget totals 54,392,637,648 rials as far as incomes and other credit sources and expenditures and other payments are concerned.

The budget bill envisages special credits and a foreign exchange budget to meet the people's needs for essential goods. This is a bid to prevent price hikes and an increase in development allocations to the country's deprived areas. The bill also bans price hikes in water and electricity used in the agricultural sector, allocates special credits for the reconstruction of war- stricken areas, and envisages gas distribution to the country's deprived areas.

Among other regulations sanctioned by the Majles were ones dealing with implementing steps on a single parity rate for foreign exchange and monitoring these incomes; paying special attention to education, higher education, agriculture, the defense structure, health and hygiene, and industries; determining the budget of state organizations and investments; extending banking facilities to various fields, especially to production activities; creating jobs; and banning the purchase of limousines by state institutions.

Our parliamentary correspondent reports that debates on the budget bill began on Saturday [January 23] in the Majles. During this period, the Majles held three open sessions daily—morning, afternoon, and evening—and in a 70-hour period studied almost 400 proposals by various committees and deputies.

By law, the Majles must complete their study and approve the budget before the auspicious Ten Days of Dawn ceremonies begin. Because the Council of Guardians began studying the budget bill's articles in tandem with the Majles, the Majles will hold an open session at 1000 [0630 GMT] tomorrow 12 Bahman [1 February] to discuss the Council of Guardians' amendments to the bill.

Amendments to Bill Debated

LD0102171193 Tehran IRNA in English 1629 GMT 1 Feb 93

[All figures as received]

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 1, IRNA—The Majlis in its open morning and afternoon sessions today debated amendments to different paragraphs of the next fiscal year (March 21, 1993-March 20, 1994) budget bill as proposed by the Council of Guardians.

The single article of the budget bill was approved by the Majlis on Saturday [30 January] after eight days (taking 70 hours) of debate.

The budget totals over rials 54,392,736,648,000 in terms of revenues, other credit sources, expenses and other payments. It includes the government's general budget totalling rials 25,425,384,711,000 and the budget of state companies, banks and government affiliated profit institutes standing at rials 35,230,536,436,000.

Of the government's general budget the general revenue and other credit sources in terms of expenses and payment sources stands at rials 23,696,072,828,000.

Also the exclusive revenues of the ministries and government institutes in terms of expenses and payments stands at over rials 1,729,761,883,000.

Guardian Council Withdraws Objections

NC0202084893 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] At its session yesterday, the Guardian Council concurred that the budget bill for 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] agreed with shari'ah norms and the Constitution. The decision followed the removal of certain clauses in the bill by the Islamic Majles, clauses to which the council earlier objected, and the amendments within these clauses.

Emphasis on Cultural Resistance Cited

LD0202160093 Tehran IRNA in English 1435 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 2, IRNA—The Majlis speaker Tuesday [2 February] said that campaign against cultural assault and support for the deprived and vulnerable strata of people and for research and education sector were among the main features of the budget for next Iranian calendar year.

"In order to protect the deprived from being affected by a policy of single foreign exchange rate, the government has approved a proposal by the Majlis exempting basic goods and defence items from this policy and pay subsidies for those commodities," Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri said.

Upon the Majlis's proposal, the budget allocation for cultural activities in deprived areas has been raised by 30 billion rials, he said.

Nateq-Nuri pointed out that all government organizations except the Defence, Higher Education, and Education Ministries should earmark one percent of their respective budgets to the campaign against cultural assault. The amount is estimated at 100 billion rials, he added.

In view of the importance the Majlis attaches to educational affairs, the Majlis exempted the Education, and Culture and Higher Education Ministries from a cut in their general budgets, he said, adding this meant a $40 billion grant to universities and other higher education institutes.

This is apart from a 10 billion rial increase in the budget or research activities at universities, the Majlis speaker noted.

The speaker said that in the budget bill passed by the Majlis, it has been stipulated that 30 percent of a 2.6 billion dollar budget allocated to investment in oil industries and refineries should go to domestic companies.

The budget bill allows the organization for promotion and renovation of industries to sell 300 billion rials worth of the shares of plants operating under their supervision, next year and to spend the money on completing semi-finished factories, he said.

The same permission has been given to Iran's National Industries Organization, the Majlis speaker said.

In an effort to support domestic auto factories and encourage investments in this sector, the Majlis has prohibited government organizations from importing cars from abroad.

He cited a eight percent reduction in the general budgets allocated to government organizations as another amendment made by the Majlis to the 1372 [year beginning 21 March 1993] budget bill with an eye to making it more realistic. The reduction does not apply to agricultural sector and deprived regions.

Majles Passes Budget Bill

LD0202192593 Tehran IRNA in English 1807 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 2, IRNA—The national budget bill for the fiscal year 1372 (March 21, 1993-March 20, 1994) was passed by the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis) here today.

For the first time in 25 years the national budget will have no deficit, and no borrowing is expected to be made from the banking system.

The national budget for 1372 is rls [rials] 54,392.7 billion [bn]. The general budget of the administration is rls 25,425.8 bn while rls 35,230.5 bn is the budget for government companies and banks and affiliate profit oriented agencies of the government.

According to the budget the total expected oil revenues is upwards of rls 15,000 bn and taxation is about rls 5,500 bn. The dollar revenue on oil sales is expected to be about rls 18 bn.

Since oil production is expected to rise to about 4.5 million bpd [barrels per day] by next March there will be a better capacity for earning the expected the foreign exchange. [sentence as received] Although Iran has declared its commitment to OPEC decisions for stabilizing the oil market and raising oil prices better production capacity has increased the chances for attaining the estimated revenues.

As early as March 21 the dollar will have a single parity rate in Iran except for basic staples and for certain basic necessities. For the year 1372 the share of oil in public revenues is 67.2 per cent, the share of taxation is 23 per cent and the share of other revenues is 9.8 per cent of the total national budget.

Government expenditures in dollars for the year at rls 70 to each dollar is dlrs 250 million for buying basic staples, dlrs 420 million for buying medicines and powder milk, dlrs 32 million for buying advanced medical equipments, less than dlrs 1.2 billion for oil-derived products, and about dlrs 850 million for the military, and in total it will be about dlrs 3.6 billion.

During the coming year the Islamic Republic intends to reduce its foreign obligations by 15 per cent and rely on the country's dollar revenues for defraying those obligations which will both win the Islamic Republic better credit with its foreign credit granters as well as reduce financial obligations of the state for launching the second national development plan.

Iran's foreign obligations in dollars has not been officially announced but for a number of development projects during the first national development plan reliance on foreign monetary resources to as much as dlrs 30 billion was authorized.

For the fiscal 1372 it is expected that about half of the oil revenues will be offerred to the public at floating rates and through the Central Bank of Iran and in collaboration with the banking system.

Official sources maintain that the implementation of a single parity rate for foreign currency as of the next calendar year will induce government agencies to economize on their dollar expenditures and encourage purchase of Iran-made products, while foreign purchases will be made more cautiously.

Despite that it is expected that Iran's imports for 1372 will be less than the dlrs 28 billion this year.

The general budget of the administration has a special eye to the less privileged people. Dlrs 1.250 billion has been earmarked for purchasing basic staples from foreign sources and for controlling their consumer prices. Also a subsidy of dlrs 2,322 billion will be made for protecting the less privileged sectors of the society.

In sum the fiscal 1372-budget has higher allocations for current expenditures and development projects for ensuring the march towards a steady growth of the national economy, and successful implementation of development projects.

Protest on Serbian Atrocities at UN Office

LD0202133693 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] A great number of Iranian basiji [mobilization] sisters congregated in front of the UN office in Tehran this morning, condemning the Serbian atrocities against the innocent women of Bosnia-Hercergovina. Chanting slogans such as: Serbs exterminate! West tolerates! Islam is victorious! Serbia is vanquished!—the group of basiji women from Tehran declared their abhorrence of the bestial acts of the Serbian aggressors. They called on the United Nations to prevent the continuation of Serbian atrocities against the defenseless people of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Nuclear Engineering Course Deemed 'Successful'

LD0102151293 Tehran IRNA in English 1442 GMT 1 Feb 93

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 1, IRNA—The visiting head of the Technical Cooperation Department of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Europe and the Middle East, Lopez Cotarelo, here Monday [1 February] said the first graduate course on nuclear engineering held in Iran was successful.

Speaking in the final session of the course the IAEA official referred to vital role of specialized courses in nuclear industry. He added that IAEA would support holding of similar training courses in Iran in future.

The graduate course in nuclear engineering, the first ever held in Iran, was jointly sponsored by the IAEA, Iran's Atomic Energy Organization (AEO) and Emir Kabir and Sharif Universities.

Special certificates were awarded to the participants by Vice-President and head of AEO Reza Amrollahi.

Maldives

Government To Deport Indian Over Political Links

BK3101103493 Hong Kong AFP in English 1007 GMT 31 Jan 93

[Text] Colombo, Jan 31 (AFP)—The Maldivian government is to deport a leading Indian businessmen for allegedly engaging in political activities linked to powerful government minister Ilyas Ibrahim, sources said Sunday [31 January].

Political sources in Male said that the government ordered G. Aggarwal, who has a number of business enterprises in Maldives and the region, to leave the tiny Indian Ocean atoll nation by Monday.

"The official explanation given is that Aggarwal has been ordered to leave because he was involved in running illegal businesses apart from the government-approved shops in Male," a source said by telephone from the Maldivian capital, "but there is no doubt it is due to his political links with Ibrahim."

The source said Aggarwal was expected to depart the Muslim archipelago Monday on an Indian Airlines flight.

Ibrahim, who is minister of Atolls Administration and known to have powerful military connections due to being a former deputy defence minister, was earlier sacked by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom over a corruption scandal, but later taken back and given his present job.

Ibrahim, a brother-in-law of Gayoom, was also a target of Maldivian dissidents and reformists when he held the influential post defense minister.

With presidential elections due in September, Ibrahim is likely to be a candidate, but Gayoom has also said he was willing to stand for a fourth consecutive five-year term.

Nepal

Communist Party Concludes Week-Long Congress

BK0202150393 Hong Kong AFP in English 1443 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Kathmandu, Feb 2 (AFP)—The Nepal Communist Party (United Marxist and Leninist) (NCP-UML) completed a week-long national congress, re-electing two top executives despite strong youth opposition, a party source said Tuesday.

Following deliberations overnight Monday, the NCP-UML congress re-elected Man Mohan Adhikar as chairman and Madan Bhadari as general secretary amid strong opposition from a hardline group of young activists, the source added.

"There was a hot debate among the rank and file activists and also the politburo members of the NCP-UML on the functioning of the party high command," another source within the party said.

Participants criticized "the docile behaviour" of Adhikari in dealing with Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, whose Nepali Congress party is currently in power.

The congress also decided to form a nine-member Central Standing Committee to be chosen from the party's 25-member Central Committee.

The reconstruction of the party executive and the re-election of Adhikar and Bhadari were aimed at making the party stronger and present a better opposition to the Nepali Congress party, which it will challenge in elections due in May 1996.

In separate resolutions, the congress also called for Koirala's immediate resignation and denounced a recent hike in electricity prices, the government's failure to control market prices and to provide relief for the public, the source added.

It also reviewed the international political situation and discussed the failure of communism in Eastern Europe and prospects for Nepal.

Pakistan

Spokesman Notes 'Deep Concern' at Afghan Fighting

BK0302102893 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Domestic Service in Urdu 1000 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Pakistan has expressed deep concern over the escalation of fighting in Afghanistan and rocket attacks on Kabul. Speaking to newsmen in Islamabad today, a Foreign Office spokesman said the Pakistani Embassy in Kabul was partially damaged due to rocket attacks on the city yesterday evening. However, he said, no member of the embassy staff was injured and some nonessential members are being withdrawn. The spokesman said Pakistan is in touch with all sides in Afghanistan and efforts are being made for a cease-fire and a broad-based resolution of the issue. He expressed regret over the deaths of four UN officials in Afghanistan.

Embassy Staff Evacuated

BK0302092893 Hong Kong AFP in English 0914 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 3 (AFP)—Pakistan decided Wednesday to evacuate most of its diplomatic staff from Kabul after rocketing severely damaged its embassy in the Afghan capital, the Foreign Office said here.

A Foreign Office spokesman, expressing the government's "deep concern" at renewed fighting in Afghanistan, said about a dozen "non-essential personnel are being evacuated from Kabul" immediately.

The embassy will be manned by a skeleton staff of about six or seven people, he added.

The move came as Tuesday's heavy rocketing damaged the Pakistan Embassy, smashing its front gate and walls, but causing no injuries.

Pakistan extended material and political support to the Afghan mojahedin in their 14-year fight to topple a Moscow-backed communist government.

Analysts noted that even during the heaviest fighting in the past, Islamabad maintained high staffing levels of diplomats in Kabul.

The spokesman condemned fighting between mojahedin factions which has escalated recently and also deplored the killing of four United Nations workers in an ambush near Jalalabad on Monday.

The spokesman read a strongly worded government statement urging Afghan leaders "to rise above narrow interests" and to take the appropriate steps to restore peace in the country and to preserve its unity and territorial integrity." [quotation marks as received]

Pakistan is backing the initiative of King Fahd for proposed multi-party Afghan peace talks in Saudi Arabia and the spokesman said Pakistan was in touch with all sides.

"We are making efforts to achieve a ceasefire and evolve a broad- based solution in Afghanistan, responsive to the interest and well-being of the people" of the war-ravaged country.

Sharif Says Nuclear Program Not Weapon-Oriented

BK0202150093 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, has said Pakistan's nuclear program is not weapon-oriented. In an interview with INDONESIAN OBSERVER of Jakarta, the prime minister said Pakistan is committed to the goal of nuclear nonproliferation at the regional as well as global level. Pakistan's nuclear program is geared for the purposes of economic and social development of the country. Referring to Pakistan's proposal of five-nation conference on nuclear nonproliferation in South Asia, the prime minister said China supports our proposal. China and Pakistan have also worked together at multilateral forums for achieving the goal of nuclear nonproliferation at regional and global levels.

On Afghanistan, the prime minister said our policy underlines the promotion of conciliation, harmony, and consensus among Afghans, preservation of Afghanistan's unity and territorial integrity, and support for its reconstruction.

Sharif Speaks of Muslim Plight in India, Bosnia

BK0302033193 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has urged the world community to ensure that brutalities perpetrated on Muslims in the occupied Kashmir, India, and Bosnia are brought to an immediate end and that their rights are protected. He made this appeal in an address to the 49th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva yesterday. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said that up until today at least 10,000 Kashmiri men, women, and children have been killed in cold blood by the Indian forces. This was in retaliation for the freedom struggle intensified by the Kashmiri Muslims since January 1990. The prime minister told delegates to the session of the commission that young Kashmiri men, including eight and nine year old boys, were special targets. They were rounded up in search and destroy operations and taken for interrogation in prisons and army camps. They were routinely subjected to torture, often of a most cruel nature, and later killed in fake encounters.

The prime minister said the Indian forces had tried to break the spirit of Kashmir resistance by dishnoring Kashmiri women. Their molestations are common. The Kashmir struggle is as just and legitimate as any other struggle. To denigrate it as terrorism is perversity. India's endeavor to portray the Kashmiri struggle as one sustained by Pakistan is a transparent lie. However, we pray for the success of their struggle. We offer them our moral, political, and diplomatic support, but we do not provide them arms, the prime minister added.

Discussing the plight of Indian Muslims, the prime minister said some 200,000 fanatics were allowed to destroy the 500-year-old Babri Mosque. An orgy of communal violence was let loose following its destruction. Thousands of Muslims were killed in cold blood and their homes, villages, and towns were destroyed.

Turning to the torture practiced by Serbians, the prime minister said it was most callous one. Some 30,000 Muslim women have been molested by Serb criminals and over 100,000 Bosnians have been killed, often in a most cruel manner.

The prime minister said fundamental rights have also been denied to the people of Palestine. The tragedy of Palestine was illustrated by the illegal deportation of 400 Palestinians, who are living in an inhospitable terrain.

Painting the picture of brutalities perpetrated on Muslims in these areas, the prime minister stressed that the oppressed Muslims should be immediately given freedom and basic rights.

Defense Minister Views Yeltsin's Kashmir Statement

BK0302024693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Defense Minister Syed Ghaus Ali Shah said that Pakistan has no intention of closing its border with India and if the Indian Administration wants to do this, it will have no effect on the freedom struggle in occupied Kashmir. Talking to newsmen in Islamabad yesterday, he said that the Kashmiri people's movement is indigenous.

About Russian President Boris Yeltsin's comments on Kashmir, the defense minister said they could affect peace in the region.

Maulana Fazlur Rahman, secretary general of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Islam-Fazlur Rahman group, said that the Russian president's recent statement on the Kashmir issue is contrary to the relevant United Nations resolutions. Addressing a conference sponsored by his party on the Kashmir movement in Islamabad yesterday, he expressed concern at the silence of the United Nations over nonimplementation of the world body's resolutions on the Kashmir issue.

Further Criticism

BK0302035693 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Feb 93

[Text] Dr. Abdullah Naseef, secretary general of World Muslim League, assured that the league will focus attention on the immense problems faced by the Muslim community. Speaking at a banquet hosted by Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan in his honor in Muzaffarabad last night, the secretary general of the league said the Muslim community could overcome all difficulties by uniting under the banner of Islam and seeking assistance from Almighty God because nobody else can help in this hour of crisis.

Speaking at the banquet, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister thanked the league for condemning the Indian campaign of search and destroy operations in occupied Kashmir and for issuing an appeal to the Islamic world for imposing economic sanctions on India.

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister criticized the Russian president's statement on the Kashmir issue and described it as siding with those who have no respect for humanity and international agreements.

Mahtab Ahmad Khan, federal minister for Kashmir affairs and northern areas, also criticized Mr. Yeltsin's statement.

Minister Denies F-16's Grounded for Lack of Spares

BK0302124193 Karachi DAWN in English 3 Feb 93 p 18

[Text] Islamabad, Feb. 2—No F-16 fighter aircraft has been grounded because of non-availability of spare parts from United States, Defense Minister Syed Ghous Ali Shah said on Tuesday. Responding to newsmen questions at a dinner here, he said "although United States had stopped providing spare parts for F-16 fighter aircraft yet no plane has been grounded due to that reason."

He said "Pakistan was acquiring necessary spare parts from the open market though they were quite expensive."

In response to another question, the Defense Minister said "experts were evaluating both Mirage 2000 and MiG 29 to see which plane would meet our requirements. However, Pakistan would not put all its eggs in one basket after Pressler Amendment's experience." "It had been decided not to entirely rely on one country for our defense requirements," he added.

He assured the nation that the Government would not keep its skies insecure and do whatever would be in the interest of the country. The Minister said the Government was trying to develop defense industry in the country. "Our attention is focused to set up industries in this sector," he stated.

In reply to another question, he said "Pakistan was ready to sort out issues with India through dialogue so that the two countries could utilise their meagre resources on the development of its people."

"No peace, however, could be achieved without solving the longstanding Kashmir issue. India should accept Kashmir as a disputed territory and stop claiming it as a part of India so that meaningful dialogue could be held," he added.

Daily Suggests Alternatives to Leasing U.S. Ships

BK0302113393 Lahore PAKISTAN in Urdu 29 Jan 93 p 10

[Editorial: "Navy's Alternatives to U.S. Ships"]

[Text] The assessment of Admiral Sayeed M. Khan, Pakistan's navy chief, seemed correct when he said that the U.S. demand for the return of nine ships leased to Pakistan is actually a trick to keep Islamabad from pursuing its peaceful nuclear program. Talking informally to journalists after a seminar on the importance of ports and shipping in the changed scenario, he said that the United States has never in the past taken back any ships it leased to any country. After the expiration of the lease term, the ships were given (?permanently) to the concerned countries. That has been the case with Pakistan as well and we have the example of the warship, PNS Dhaka, before us. That ship, too, was leased to us, but it is now Pakistan's property. A U.S. team is coming to Pakistan on 31 January and a decision about the return of the ships will be made after discussions with them. We will have to take four small ships from the United Kingdom and Russia in place of the U.S. vessels. Prior to this, the United States stopped the supply of arms and spare parts, linking that, too, with Pakistan's nuclear program.

The United States has been Pakistan's traditional ally and Pakistan has definitely benefited from this friendship, but Islamabad has also faced serious difficulties as a result of the inconsistency and ups and downs in Washington's attitude on certain occasions. Pakistan found itself endangered from various sides in the wake of the stoppage of U.S. aid at several critical moments, especially when the country was passing through a major crisis. Even then Islamabad maintained its ties with the United States and tried to remove Washington's misgivings and to persuade it to see facts in their correct perspective. But, unfortunately, the United States did not agree.

Since the United States has lost interest in the region following the end of the Afghan war and the disappearance of the former Soviet Union from the scene, Washington's lukewarm attitude toward Pakistan is comprehensible. But can the United States, as a superpower, adopt a nonchalant attitude toward this region? The answer to this question must be no. The coming era will see Asia emerging as a dominant region. Even today, Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, and Thailand are among the Asian countries that can claim to be equal to the West. Other Asian countries are also not as backward as they are believed to be. For any effective arrangement to defend the rights and interests of mankind in the future, the cooperation of Asian countries will be needed.

As far as Pakistan is concerned, it is the most important country in the region in view of its geographic location and political status. It enjoys friendly and fraternal ties with China, the newly independent states of Central Asia, Iran, United Arab Emirates, and the Middle East countries. There is no doubt that Pakistan's relations with India are currently tense, but this situation cannot last forever. The Kashmir issue needs to be settled through a free plebiscite on the basis of the UN resolutions and India will have to agree to it sooner or later. Pakistan is always ready to establish cordial relations based on equality with all its neighbors, including India.

As for Pakistan's nuclear program, it is solely for peaceful purposes. Islamabad has already provided all details and all kinds of assurances in this regard. But, in spite of that, if the United States does not believe Pakistani declarations, then the issue should be left to a time which will ultimately vindicate Islamabad's stand as one based on truth. Pakistan is not interested in developing nuclear weapons; and even if it were to build them, where would it use them? Even though the stoppage of the U.S. economic and military aid is a cause of anxiety and concern, Pakistan is fully aware of the need to maintain an efficient and effective Navy to protect its shores and trade routes. Therefore, it cannot sit idle after returning the leased ships to the United States. It will have to look for some alternatives, and, in today's world, it may be difficult but not at all impossible to do. As stated by Admiral Sayeed M. Khan, four alternative small ships will be acquired from the United Kingdom and Russia. While we have already used UK-made ships, the Russian ships will be new for us. The Russian vessels are (?not) suitable technically. We may face difficulty in acquiring spare parts. In any case, the kind of alternative arrangement that we need to make will be finalized only after 31 January when the United States will inform us of its final decision. Even if Washington does not take back its ships, it is not in our interest to rely on a single source. We should continue to take steps to make use of the alternative sources, because, in today's world, we cannot afford to have a weak Navy.

Sindhi Nationalists Blamed in Attack in Hyderabad

BK0202154493 Hong Kong AFP in English 1312 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Karachi, Feb 2 (AFP)—Five people, including three young girls, were injured when two unidentified motorcyclists threw grenades at a roadside restaurant in Hyderabad, 130 kilometres (80 miles) north of here, police said Tuesday. Following the attack, which occurred late Monday, the injured were rushed to hospital in serious condition, ambulance sources said.

An earlier report, carried by the official ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN (APP), said the motorcyclists threw some explosive materials wrapped in shopping bags, injuring four people. Police blamed the incidents on Sindhi nationalists, who are opposed to the continued migration of Biharis from Bangladesh into the region.

The Sindhis fear the Biharis will join mohajirs, who migrated to Pakistan from India after the 1947 partition of the subcontinent, and create further economic and political rivalry.

At least 22 people were killed and 70 injured in a January 23 bomb attack in Hyderabad. The victims were mostly mohajirs, who had been demanding the Biharis be repatriated.

The first batch of some 323 Biharis out of an estimated 238,000 living in camps in Bangladesh arrived in Pakistan on January 10.

Hyderabad, the third largest city in Pakistan with more than two million people, has been the scene of frequent bombings.

Police Detain Sunni Fundamentalist Party Activists

BK0202155093 Hong Kong AFP in English 1537 GMT 2 Feb 93

[Text] Multan, Pakistan, Feb 2 (AFP)—Nearly 40 activists of a Pakistani Sunni Muslim fundamentalist party, known for its strong anti-Shiite views, were detained here Tuesday to prevent a protest rally, police said. Police sources said the arrests were aimed at foiling a plan by the Pakistan Anjuman Sipah e Sahaba (PASS) to organize a 500-kilometre (310-mile) mass caravan protest from Friday.

PASS vice president Sultan Mahmood Zia claimed the party had suffered more than 200 arrests in Punjab province, but said the protest would go ahead. The party plans to take its supporters in a caravan from here to Islamabad to press its demand that the government enact a law to punish sacrilege against holy men. It is also demanding that Pakistan citizens state their religion on national identity cards, a move opposed by Christians and other religious minorities.

The district of Jhang, the base of PASS in Punjab province, has been hit by frequent sectarian violence in the past resulting in many casualties.